DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 290 679 SO 018 766

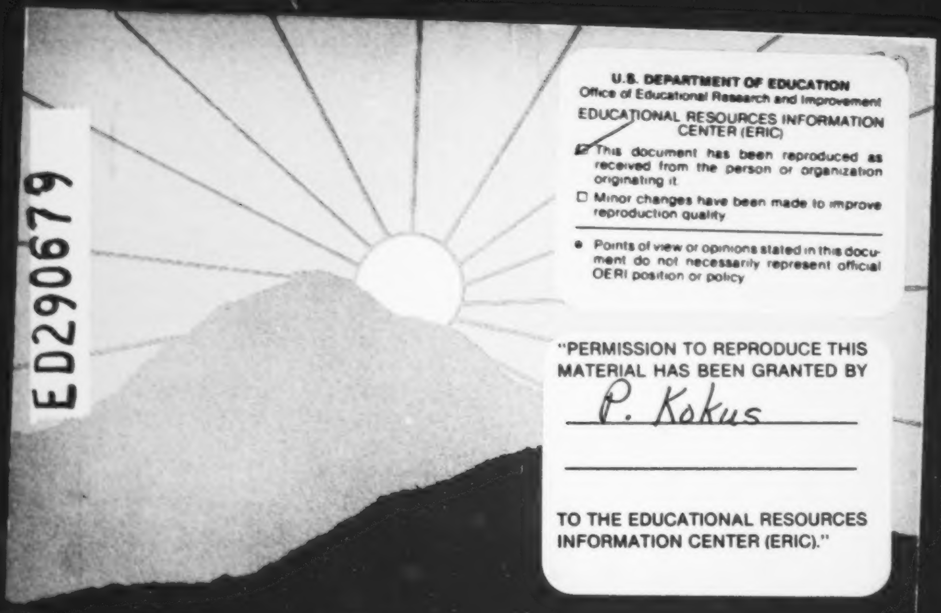
AUTHOR	Kealey, Robert J.
TITLE	The Prayer of Catholic Educators.
INSTITUTION	National Catholic Educational Association, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	87
NOTE	152p.; This book was produced as a result of a grant from the Father Michael J. McGivney Memorial Fund for New Initiatives in Catholic Education.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Catholic Educators; Catholic Schools; Elementary Secondary Education; Parochial Schools; *Religious Education; Religious Holidays; Resource Materials
IDENTIFIERS	*Prayer

ABSTRACT

This prayer book is intended for Catholic educators who are involved in the ministry of education and as teachers in Catholic schools. Daily prayer services are included, each centering on a particular theme pertinent to the personal and professional lives of ministers and teachers. The first week of themes for the month focus on the concept of ministry; the second week of the month examines the life of Jesus and the model he presents to teachers. The final 17 prayers of the month present reflections on values that teachers practice in their ministry to students. Additional prayer services have been provided for the days of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. Several prayer services provide teachers with an opportunity to reflect on the lives of saints who have exercised the ministry of education. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED290679



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
● Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
P. Kokus
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

THE PRAYER OF CATHOLIC EDUCATORS

by Robert J. Kealey, F.S.C., Ed.D.

Published by the Department of Elementary Schools
National Catholic Educational Association

SO018766

THE PRAYER OF CATHOLIC EDUCATORS

by Robert J. Kealey, F.S.C., Ed.D.

Published by the Department of Elementary Schools
National Catholic Educational Association

Copyright © 1987 by the National Catholic Educational Association, Washington, DC. All rights reserved, including the right of reproducing in whole or in part in any form. Published in the United States of America by the National Catholic Educational Association.

Cover, art work and format created and executed by Tia Gray of the National Catholic Educational Association.

This book is dedicated to my mother and father who first taught and encouraged me to pray.

Table of Contents

Page
Acknowlegements vii
Preface ix

Daily Prayers for the Month

Teacher's Prayer Before Class 1
Day 1—Ministry of Teaching 2
Day 2—The Call to the Ministry of Teaching 4
Day 3—Jesus' Command to Teach 6
Day 4—The Ministry of Catholic Education 8
Day 5—Ministers Teach the Message 10
Day 6—Ministers Form Community 12
Day 7—Ministers Perform Service 14
Day 8—To Teach as Jesus Did 16
Day 9—Jesus the Model Teacher 18
Day 10—Jesus the Authoritative Teacher 20
Day 11—Jesus, Model of Concern for Students 22
Day 12—Jesus, Model of Good Pedagogy 24
Day 13—Jesus, Challenger of Students 26
Day 14—Jesus, Model of a Prayerful Educator 28
Day 15—Faith 30
Day 16—Hope 32
Day 17—Love 34
Day 18—Vigilance 36
Day 19—Justice 38
Day 20—Reconciliation 40
Day 21—Courage 42
Day 22—Patience 44
Day 23—Perseverance 46
Day 24—Zeal 48
Day 25—Studiousness 50
Day 26—Prudence 52
Day 27—Confidence 54
Day 28—Humility 56
Day 29—Just Disciplinarian 58
Day 30—Gratitude 60
Day 31—Honesty 62

Liturgical Year **Page**

Sunday in Advent—The Mystery of God....64
Monday in Advent—Faith in God's Word....66
Tuesday in Advent—Proclaiming Jesus....68
Wednesday in Advent—Praise of God....70
Thursday in Advent—Trust in God....72
Friday in Advent—Preparation for the Coming of Jesus....74
Saturday in Advent—Judgment....76
Christmas—Acceptance of Poor Students....78
St. Stephen—Fidelity to the Word of God....80
Holy Innocents—Innocence of Children....82
Holy Family—Role of Family in Education....84
Epiphany—Acceptance of God's Word....86
Sunday in Lent—Attachment to Jesus....88
Monday in Lent—Repentance....90
Tuesday in Lent—Spirit of Sacrifice....92
Wednesday in Lent—Spirit of Detachment....94
Thursday in Lent—Appreciation of the Eucharist....96
Friday in Lent—Forgiveness....98
Saturday in Lent—Interior Peace....100
Sunday in Easter—Joy in the Truth....102
Monday in Easter—Fidelity to the Truth....104
Tuesday in Easter—Acceptance of the Truth....106
Wednesday in Easter—Growing in the Truth....108
Thursday in Easter—Presenting the Truth....110
Friday in Easter—Confidence in the Truth....112
Saturday in Easter—Reward for Following the Truth....114
Ascension Thursday—Planting the Seed....116
Pentecost Sunday—Enlightenment by the Spirit....118

Feasts of the Year

Page
January 4—Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton 120
January 5—Saint John Neumann 122
January 25—Conversion of Saint Paul, Apostle 140
February 11—Our Lady of Lourdes 138
February 22—Chair of Saint Peter 140
March 19—Saint Joseph, Husband of Mary 124
March 25—Annunciation 138
April 7—Saint John Baptist de La Salle 126
May 1—Saint Joseph the Worker 124
May 3—Saints Philip and James, Apostles 140
May 14—Saint Matthias, Apostle 140
June 24—Birth of John the Baptist 128
June 29—Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles 140
July 3—Saint Thomas, Apostle 140
July 16—Our Lady of Mount Carmel 138
July 25—Saint James, Apostle 140
August 15—Assumption of Mary into Heaven 138
August 22—Queenship of Mary 138
August 24—Saint Bartholomew, Apostle 140
August 29—Beheading of John the Baptist 128
September 8—Birth of Mary 138
September 21—Saint Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist 140
October 7—Our Lady of the Rosary 138
October 18—Saint Luke, Evangelist 140
October 19—Saint Isaac Jogues and Companions 130
October 28—Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles 140
November 1—Feast of All Saints 132
November 2—Feast of All Souls 134
November 13—Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini 136
November 21—Presentation of Mary 138
November 30—Saint Andrew, Apostle 140
December 8—Immaculate Conception 138
December 12—Our Lady of Guadalupe 138

Acknowledgements

The scriptural passages quoted in this book have been taken from *Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version (An Ecumenical Edition)* copyright 1973, by Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America and approved by Cardinal Koenig for the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate. Grateful acknowledgement is given for the use of this translation of the Bible for this prayer book.

In some passages the wording has been slightly changed in order to use inclusive language.

This book has been produced as a result of a grant from the Father Michael J. McGivney Memorial Fund for New Initiatives in Catholic Education. This fund is supported by the Knights of Columbus of the United States and Canada and is named in honor of its founder.

The author wishes to acknowledge the support and advice given to him in this project by Rev. J. Stephen O'Brien, the Executive Director of the Department of Chief Administrators in Catholic Education of the National Catholic Educational Association, and Sister Lourdes Sheehan, R.S.M., Executive Director of the National Association of Boards of Education of NCEA.

The author expresses deep gratitude to Brother Albert Clark, F.S.C., Associate Professor of Religious Studies of Manhattan College, Riverdale, N.Y., who reviewed the entire manuscript and offered valuable assistance with the content and wording of each prayer service.

The author also acknowledges the team of reviewers from the Department of Elementary Schools Executive Committee who examined the completed manuscript. These include: Sister Therese O'Rourke, Assistant Superintendent, Diocese of Scranton, PA; Kathleen Burt, Principal, St. Peter and Paul School, Fall River, MA; Roy Dick, Principal, St. Francis of Assisi School, Rochester, MN. Also involved in reviewing the manuscript were Lori Ann Nicklay, Sr. Annette Dobitz and Margi Newkirk, teachers at St. Francis of Assisi School in Rochester, MN.

The author also expresses deep appreciation to Wendy Royston, the Administrative Assistant of the Department of Elementary Schools of NCEA, who completed the meticulous task of proofreading the manuscript and the galley sheets. She also organized and supervised the numerous steps involved in the printing of the text.

Preface

This prayer book is intended for Catholic educators who are involved in the ministry of education. Today the People of God acknowledge and celebrate the many ministries found in the Catholic Church in addition to the traditional ordained ministry.

Each daily prayer service in this prayer book centers on a particular theme that is pertinent to the personal and professional lives of ministers of education who seek to make Jesus better known to their students. The first seven themes of the month focus on the concept of ministry. The second week of the month examines the life of Jesus and the model he presents to teachers. These prayer services call teachers to teach as Jesus did. The final seventeen prayers of the month present reflections on values that teachers practice in their ministry to students, e.g., patience, zeal, prudence, faith, studiousness. The eight values in the NCEA "Vision and Values" program are included during these last two weeks. Additional prayer services have been provided for the days of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. Finally, several prayer services offer teachers the opportunity to reflect on the lives of some saints who have exercised the ministry of education.

Several distinct but interrelated parts of these prayer services enable the educators to better understand and evaluate their ministry of education. Each prayer service revolves around a theme; a brief explanation of each theme places it in the context of the teaching ministry. The ministers of education begin by recalling that they pray and work in the presence of God. A reading, generally from one of the Gospels, follows. This reading most often presents an event from the life of Jesus that relates to the theme for this particular prayer service. Then the ministers pause to reflect on the application of this reading and the theme to their own lives. After this reflection which may be as brief or as long as the individuals desire, the ministers recite a response generally taken from one of the psalms. The ministers next have the opportunity to present their special petitions to God, a suggested response is given for these petitions. The teachers summarize these requests by reciting the Lord's Prayer. Finally, a concluding prayer summarizes the theme and the ministers' response to it.

The prayer services are designed to be used by educational ministers either alone or in a group. If the service is recited as a group, one person serves as the leader and another as the reader. The group may be divided into two parts to recite alternately the response.

The intention of these prayer services is to enable teaching ministers to reflect on their ministry and through this reflection to come to know and imitate to a greater degree Jesus, the master teacher.

August 15, 1987

Robert J. Kealey, F.S.C.
Executive Director

James Griesgraber
President

Department of Elementary Schools
National Catholic Educational Association

TEACHER'S PRAYER BEFORE CLASS

You, O God, are my strength, my patience,
my light, and my counsel.
It is you who make responsive to me the students
confided to my care.
Abandon me not to myself for one moment.
For my own conduct and for that of my students,
grant me the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of knowledge and piety,
the spirit of holy fear of you,
and an ardent zeal to procure your glory.
I unite my efforts to those of Jesus Christ, the master teacher,
and I beg the Most Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph,
and St. John Baptist de La Salle to assist me
in the exercise of my teaching ministry.

Amen.

Theme—MINISTRY OF TEACHING

Explanation—Through the mystery of everyday events God invites teachers to share in the educational mission of the Church. Teachers freely accept the call to be ministers. Those who respond have a unique vocation of service to the Catholic community.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Ephesians 4: 4—7; 11—13*

There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Provider of All, who is above all and through all and in all.

And God's gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Reflection—Through the ministry of teaching God invites us to share in spreading the Kingdom of God.

Pause

Response—*Psalm 23*

The Wonder Counselor is my shepherd, I shall not want;
I lie down in green pastures.

The Counselor guides me beside still waters,
to restore my soul.

I travel along paths of righteousness,
to proclaim the glory of God.

I fear no evil; for you are with me;
your rod and your staff comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil,
my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
of my life;
and I shall live in the house of my Counselor for ever.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Wonder Counselor, shepherd us.

Our Father...

Prayer—Divine Guidance, you call us to imitate the teaching ministry of Jesus and to share in the teaching mission of the Church. We ask you to guide your ministers as they educate your children. We ask this in the name of Christ, the teacher. Amen.

Day 2

Theme—THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY OF TEACHING

Explanation—God invites us to share in the teaching ministry of Jesus. While we may feel inadequate for this responsibility, God provides us with the grace to be effective in this ministry.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Jeremiah 1: 4—10*

Now the word of God came to me saying,

> "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Then I said, "Ah, God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." But God said to me,

> "Do not say, 'I am only a youth;' for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you."

Then God put forth a hand and touched my mouth; and God said to me,

> "Behold, I have put my words into your mouth. See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

Reflection—God has both called us to this ministry and given us the grace to accomplish our tasks.

Pause

Response—*Ephesians 1: 3—5; 11—14*

Blessed be God the Source of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

even as God chose us before the foundation of the world,
that we should be holy and blameless.

God destined us in love to be children in Jesus Christ,
according to the purpose of God's will...

In God, according to the purpose which accomplishes all things according to the counsel,

we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of God's glory.

In God you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in God, were sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit,

which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise and glory of God.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Giver of Ministries, guide us to act in your name.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of All Knowledge, we recognize that you call us to this ministry of Catholic education. We pray that you make us worthy of this call. We ask this through Christ, our model. Amen.

Theme—JESUS' COMMAND TO TEACH

Explanation—A reading of the four Gospel accounts of Jesus' life reveals that the major task of his public ministry was teaching. He taught the apostles who taught the first Christians. The reading today focuses on Jesus' command to his disciples to teach.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 28: 16—20*

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Reflection—This passage clearly indicates that we are called to share in the teaching ministry of Jesus. A key aspect of our teaching is to "make disciples" of our students.

Pause

Response—*Psalm 78: 1–8*

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;
  incline your ears to the words of my mouth!

I will open my mouth in a parable;

I will utter dark sayings from of old,
  things that we have heard and have known,
  that our ancestors have told us.

We will not hide them from the children,

but tell them to the coming generation—
  the glorious deeds of God,
  the wonders that have been wrought.

God established a testimony in Jacob,
  and appointed a law in Israel,

which God commanded our ancestors to teach their children;

that the next generation might know them,
  the children yet unborn,

and arise and tell them to their children,
  so that they should set their hope in God,

and not forget the works of God,
  but keep God's commandments...

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Christ, our model teacher, strengthen us.

Our Father...

Prayer—O God, you give us the example of Jesus, the teacher, and he instructs us to continue his ministry of education. Enable us to faithfully follow his command to teach and impart your word with fidelity. We ask this through Jesus, our model teacher. Amen.

Theme—THE MINISTRY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Explanation—American Catholic education arose in the Nineteenth Century because of the dissatisfaction Catholics had with the way religion was presented in the common school. Catholic education seeks to lead people and society to accept the Gospel message as presented by the Catholic Church.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*To Teach as Jesus Did*, Sections 7, 8, 10, 14

Catholic education is an expression of the mission entrusted by Jesus to the Church He founded. Through education the Church seeks to prepare its members to proclaim the Good News and to translate this proclamation into action. Since the Christian vocation is a call to transform oneself and society with God's help, the educational efforts of the Church must encompass the twin purpose of personal sanctification and social reform in the light of Christian values.

Thus one crucial measure of the success or failure of the educational ministry is how well it enables people to hear the message of hope contained in the Gospel, to base their love and service of God upon this message, to achieve a vital personal relationship with Christ, and to share the Gospel's realistic view of the human condition which recognizes the fact of evil and personal sin while affirming hope...

The success of the Church's educational mission will also be judged by how well it helps the Catholic community to see the dignity of human life with the vision of Jesus and involve itself in the search for solutions to the pressing problems of society. Christians are obliged to seek justice and peace in the world. Catholics individually and collectively should join wherever possible with all persons of good will in the effort to solve social problems in ways which consistently reflect Gospel values.

The educational mission of the Church is an integrated ministry embracing three interlocking dimensions: the message revealed by God which the Church proclaims; fellowship in the life of the Holy Spirit; service to the Christian community and the entire human community...Each educational program or institution under Church sponsorship is obliged to contribute in its own way to the realization of the threefold purpose within the total educational ministry.

Reflection—Do we recognize our ministry role in Catholic education? Do we accept the goals of Catholic education?

Pause

Response—*Isaiah 61: 1—3; 10*

The Spirit of God is upon me,
because God has anointed me

to bring good tidings to the afflicted;
God has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted;

to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

to proclaim the year of God's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,

the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

I will greatly rejoice in God,
my soul shall exult in my God;

for God has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
God has covered me with the robe of righteousness.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Jesus, our fellow teacher, guide our efforts.

Our Father...

Prayer—Teacher of All Peoples, you make Catholic education to flourish throughout this land and call thousands of your people to be teaching ministers. Guide this enterprise and bless these ministers with the gift of integrity. We ask this in the name of your Son, our fellow teaching minister. Amen.

Theme—MINISTERS TEACH THE MESSAGE

Explanation—Ministers of Catholic education are called to teach the message of the Gospel. This message was revealed by Jesus and the Church serves as the guarantor of its authenticity.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*To Teach as Jesus Did*, Sections 16—18

Revelation is the act by which God unfolds to mankind the mystery of Himself and His plan for salvation. In Jesus, the Son of God, the message of the Old Law was fulfilled and the fullness of God's message was communicated. At the time of the Apostles the message of salvation was completed...It is this message, this doctrine, which the Church is called to proclaim authentically and fully.

This does not preclude development in doctrine, properly understood, or change in the forms in which it is expressed. The tradition handed on by the Apostles is a "living tradition" through which God continues His conversation with His people...There is, then, a growth in understanding of the message which has been handed down.

In proclaiming all things which His Father commanded Him to reveal, Jesus used images from the lives of His hearers and spoke in the idiom of His day. The Church, too, must use contemporary methods and language to proclaim the message of Christ to men and women today. The proclamation of the message is therefore "not a mere repetition of ancient doctrine." Furthermore, within the fundamental unity of the faith, there is room for a plurality of cultural differences, forms of expression, and theological views. But what is taught and how it is expressed are subject to the magisterium, the teaching authority of the Church, as guarantor of authenticity.

Reflection—The Church calls on all teaching ministers to have an active faith in God and the revealed truth. This means that in our daily lives we witness to these truths.

Pause

Response—*Isaiah 52: 7—12*

How beautiful upon the mountain are the feet of those who
bring good tidings,

who publish peace, who bring good tidings,
who publish salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns."

Hark, your watchers lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy.

Break forth together into singing;
you waste places of Jerusalem;

for God has comforted the people,
God has redeemed Jerusalem.

God has shown strength before the eyes of all the nations;

and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Depart, depart, go out thence,
touch no unclean thing;

go out from the midst, purify yourselves,
you who bear the vessels of God.

For you shall go out in haste,
and you shall not go in flight,

for God will go before you,
and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Jesus, the messenger, help us to live and share the good news.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of Truth, you reveal your message to us and give us the Church to preserve it. Help your messengers of Catholic education to spread your word faithfully to all your children. We ask this in the name of your chief messenger, Jesus, our brother. Amen.

Theme—MINISTERS FORM COMMUNITY

Explanation—Ministers of Catholic education do not work alone, rather they join with other ministers to form a community of faith which is based on the common acceptance of the principles of the Gospel.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*To Teach as Jesus Did*, Sections 22—24

As God's plan unfolds in the life of an individual Christian, one grows in awareness that, as a child of God, one does not live in isolation from others. From the moment of Baptism one becomes a member of a new and larger family, the Christian community. Reborn in Baptism, one is joined to others in common faith, hope, and love. This community is based not on force or accident of geographic location or even on deeper ties of ethnic origin, but on the life of the Spirit which unites its members in a unique fellowship so intimate that Paul likens it to a body in which each individual is a part and Jesus Himself is the Head. In this community one person's problem is everyone's problem and one person's victory is everyone's victory. Never before and never since the coming of Jesus Christ has anyone proposed such a community.

Community is at the heart of Christian education, not simply as a concept to be taught, but as a reality to be lived. Through education, people must be moved to build community in all areas of life; they can do this best if they have learned the meaning of community by experiencing it. Formed by this experience, they are better able to build community in their families, their place of work, their neighborhoods, their nation, their world.

Christian fellowship grows in personal relationships of friendship, trust and love infused with a vision of men and women as children of God redeemed by Christ. It is fostered especially by the Eucharist which is at once sign of community and cause of its growth. From a Christian perspective, integral personal growth, even growth in grace and the spiritual life, is not possible without integral social life. To understand this is a high form of learning; to foster such understanding is a crucial task of education.

Reflection—We ministers grow in fellowship by coming together to share difficulties and joys and above all by uniting in our common ministry to teach students.

Pause

Response—*I Corinthians 12: 4—28*

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit;
and there are varieties of services, but the same God;

and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit...

To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom,
and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit,
who apportions to each one individually according to the divine will.

For just as the body is one and has many members,
and all members of the body, though many, are one body,
so it is in Christ.

For by one Spirit you were all baptized into one body and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

And God has appointed in the church first apostles,
second prophets, third teachers.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Spirit, unite us.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of All Unity, we ministers of Catholic education unite together in commitment to your ideals in order to spread your message and to model your ideal of unity. Draw us closer to one another so that our bond may be a source of strength to each other. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our brother. Amen.

Day 7

Theme—MINISTERS PERFORM SERVICE

Explanation—A minister is one who serves. All involved in Catholic education are challenged to be of service to others in order to reflect Jesus' service to his people.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*To Teach as Jesus Did*, Sections 28—30

The experience of Christian community leads naturally to service. Christ gives His people different gifts not only for themselves but for others. Each must serve the other for the good of all. The Church is a servant community in which those who hunger are to be filled; the ignorant are to be taught; the homeless to receive shelter; the sick cared for; the distressed consoled; the oppressed set free—all so that people may more fully realize their human potential and more readily enjoy life with God now and eternally.

But the Christian community should not be concerned only for itself...No human joy, no human sorrow is a matter of indifference to the community established by Jesus. In today's world this requires that the Christian community be involved in seeking solutions to a host of complex problems, such as war, poverty, racism, and environmental pollution, which undermine community within and among nations. Christians render such service by prayer and worship and also by direct participation in the cause of social reform.

It is imperative that the Church render the service of educational ministry today. Many institutions in society possess much larger material resources and thus can do far more to meet the material needs of people. None, however, has the unique resources of vision and values entrusted to His community by Jesus Christ. To suppose that the Church's mission of service is somehow less urgent in today's world than in the past is to fail to recognize the world's enduring spiritual need and the unique capacity for meeting the need possessed by the Christian community.

Reflection—Educational ministers render service through their teaching. Do we lead our students to render service to each other by means of prayer, worship and direct participation in the cause for social reform?

Pause

Response—*Ephesians 1: 3—18*

Blessed be the God and Giver of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.

Even as God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless...

God destined us in love to be children through Jesus Christ...

In Jesus Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us.

For God has made known to us the plan of salvation...

In Christ, we have been destined and appointed to live in God...

In Christ you also who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him have been sealed with the Holy Spirit,

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation of the knowledge...

Having the eyes of your heart enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope to which you have been called...

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Jesus, teach us to serve.

Our Father...

Prayer—Provider of All Things, we your ministers daily labor to spread abroad the knowledge of you and your creation. Give us the strength to faithfully present your message in order to lead your children to a deeper love for you. We ask this in the name of our model of service, Jesus, your Son. Amen.

Day 8

Theme—TO TEACH AS JESUS DID

Explanation—In 1972 the American Catholic bishops challenged Catholic educators to teach as Jesus did in their pastoral of the same name. Since Jesus is our model teacher, frequent reflection on his approach to teaching will help us in educating our students.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 20: 20–26*

So they watched Jesus, and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might take hold of what he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor. They asked him, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Show me a coin. Whose likeness and inscription has it?" They said, "Caesar's." He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him by what he said; but marveling at his answers they were silent.

Reflection—This story tells us how Jesus taught and then it gives an example of his teaching as he uses a concrete image to make his point. Do we in our teaching favor no one, teach in all honesty, know our students, and use the concrete to lead them to the abstract?

Pause

Gospel Reflection Passages—

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.(Luke 2: 46—48)

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. (Matthew 7: 28—29)

And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there, and coming to his own country he taught them in their synagogue, so they were astonished and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty words?" (Matthew 13: 53—55)

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything. (Mark 4: 33—34)

He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching, and journeying to Jerusalem. (Luke 13: 22)

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Source of Knowledge, help us imitate your Son and hear our prayer.

Our Father...

Prayer—Provider of All Things, we thank you for giving Jesus to us as the model teacher. Help us to better know your Son so that we may better imitate him in our ministry of teaching. We ask this through your Son, Jesus, the teacher. Amen.

Day 9

Theme—JESUS THE MODEL TEACHER

Explanation—Educators teach both by word and action. Students need to see in their teachers the concrete expression of the teachers' words.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Philippians 2: 1—11*

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being of full accord and one mind. Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of us all. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God.

Reflection—No person has ever made so great a sacrifice as Jesus. He made this sacrifice to show us how to live and teach.

Pause

Gospel Reflection Passages—

> And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of other people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. (Matthew 4: 19)
>
> "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9: 11—13)
>
> "It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your slave; even as the Son of God came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20: 26—28)
>
> "Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22: 19)
>
> "If I then, your teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." (John 13: 15)

Petitions—Let us pray for...

> **Response**—Provider of All, enable us to model our lives on Jesus' life and listen to our request.

Our Father...

Prayer—All Loving God, Jesus shows us the way to you both by his words and deeds. Help us to faithfully model him as we instruct your children. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our model. Amen.

Day 10

Theme—JESUS THE AUTHORITATIVE TEACHER

Explanation—Jesus our model was a competent teacher and he taught with authority. His disciples and even his enemies respected his teaching ability because he taught well and he taught with conviction.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

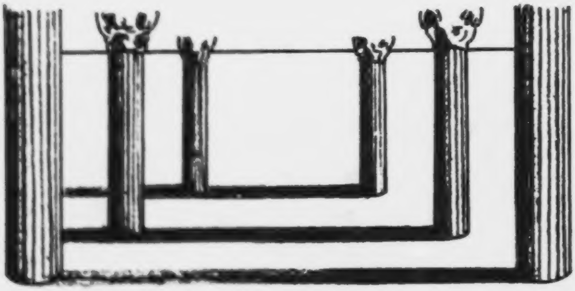
Pause

Reading—*Matthew 21: 23—27*

And when Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you a question; and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from earth?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From earth,' we are afraid of the multitude; for all hold that John was a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Reflection—We know the authority that Jesus had. The message that we teach is Jesus' message. Do we recognize this and teach his message without any reservation?

Pause



Response—*Psalm 19: 7–14*

The law of God is perfect,
reviving the soul;

the testimony of God is sure,
making wise the simple;

the precepts of God are right,
rejoicing the heart;

the commandment of God is pure,
enlightening the eyes.

The fear of God is clean,
enduring for ever;

the ordinances of God are true,
and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than pure gold,
even much fine gold;

sweeter also than honey,
and drippings from the honeycomb.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,

O God, my rock and my redeemer.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Source of Truth, give heed to our request.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of Truth, your message stands as firm today as it did when it was first announced. May the words of our mouths and the whisperings of our hearts always echo your truths. We ask this in the name of Jesus, source of all wisdom. Amen.

Theme—JESUS, MODEL OF CONCERN FOR STUDENTS

Explanation—Another reason why Jesus was an effective teacher flows from his deep knowledge of his students and his intense concern for them.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

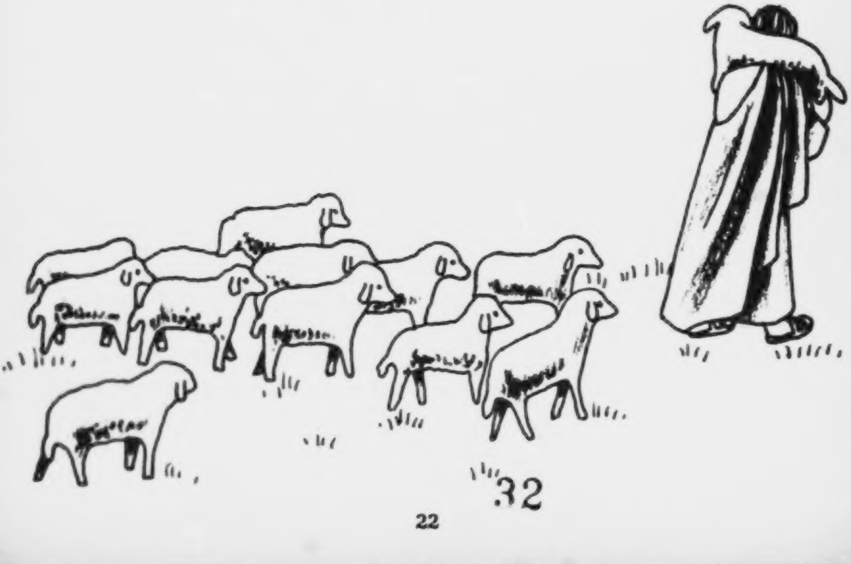
Pause

Reading—*John 10: 11–16*

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep...I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd.

Reflection—In this story Jesus compares himself to a shepherd. A good shepherd knows each of his sheep and each of the sheep knows the shepherd. A close bond exists between the sheep and the shepherd. Do we have the same concern for our students as the good shepherd has for the sheep?

Pause



Gospel Reflection Passages—

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9: 36)

As he went ashore he saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. (Mark 6: 34)

As he went ashore he saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. (Matthew 14: 14)

Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way." (Matthew 15: 32—33)

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Matthew 23: 37—38)

And he said to Jesus, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth." And Jesus looking upon him loved him. (Mark 10: 21)

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Giver of All Things, help us love our students and hear our petitions.

Our Father...

Prayer—Creator of Us All, Jesus shows us how we must have concern for others. Help us to imitate him by knowing all our students and showing concern for them. We ask this in the name of the Good Shepherd. Amen.

Day 12

Theme—JESUS, MODEL OF GOOD PEDAGOGY

Explanation—A careful reading of the Gospel reveals that Jesus was an excellent teacher. He varied his teaching approach according to the content of the lesson and his students' needs.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 13: 1–3; 10–17*

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered around him, so he got into a boat and sat there; and the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables.

Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" And he answered them, "To you it is given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to anyone who has, more will be given, and that person will have abundance; but from anyone who has not, even what that person has will be taken away. The reason I speak to them in parables, is because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear. With them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says:

> 'You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive. For these peoples' hearts have grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and their eyes have closed, lest they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn to me to heal them.'

"But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! I tell you solemnly, many prophets and holy people longed to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it."

Reflection—In this passage Jesus distinguishes between how he teaches his disciples and how he teaches other people. Why did he have different teaching approaches?

Pause

Gospel Reflection Passages—

With many such parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything. (Mark 4: 33—34)

Jesus told them this parable but they failed to understand what he meant. So Jesus spoke to them again. (John 4: 6—7)

"But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you of them." (John 16: 4)

And Jesus calling to himself a child, he put the child in the midst of them, and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18: 2—3)

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24: 27)

"No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light." (Luke 8: 16—17)

"Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds." (Luke 12: 24)

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Divine Presence, hear our prayer.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of Knowledge, Jesus has given us many examples of good teaching by using parables, illustrations, comparisons, explanations and citations from the Bible. Lead us to diversify our approaches to teaching in order to better communicate your message. We ask this in the name of our model teacher, Jesus. Amen.

Day 13

Theme—JESUS, CHALLENGER OF STUDENTS

Explanation—For students to grow they need to be challenged. Jesus challenged us by the content of his message and by asking us to reflect on questions he posed.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 5: 1–10*

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

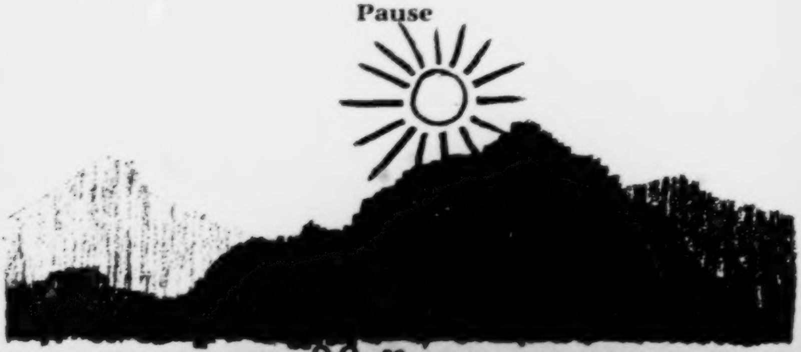
Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Reflection—What is the challenge in each of these statements of Jesus?

Pause



Gospel Reflection Passages—

And they asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?" so that they might accuse him. He said to them, "If any one of you has one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath, will you not lay hold of it and lift it out?" (Matthew 12: 10—12)

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16: 13—15)

And Jesus said to them, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" (Mark 3: 4)

And Jesus said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" (Mark 2: 25—26)

"For what does it profit a person if that person gains the whole world and loses or forfeits one's life?" (Luke 9: 25)

Jesus said to Philip, "How are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" (John 6: 5)

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God, hear our prayer.

Our Father...

Prayer—God your message is a challenge to us but Jesus shows us the way. Help us to challenge our students by presenting to them your message and calling on them to reflect on their actions. We ask this in the name of the master teacher, Jesus. Amen.

Day 11

Theme—JESUS, MODEL OF A PRAYERFUL EDUCATOR

Explanation—Jesus frequently spent time in prayer when he was not teaching. From this prayer he received the grace to be an effective educator.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 6: 5—13*

"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this:

Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
    On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our debts,
    As we also have forgiven our debtors;
And lead us not into temptation,
    But deliver us from evil."

Reflection—Jesus taught us to bring our needs to God in prayer. Do we mention our own needs and the needs of our students in our prayer?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 63*

O God, you are my God, I seek you,
  my soul thirsts for you,

my flesh faints for you,
  as in a dry and weary land where no water is.

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
  beholding your power and glory.

Because your steadfast love is better than life,
  my lips will praise you.

So I will bless you as long as I live;
  I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

My soul will feast as with marrow and fat,
  And my mouth praises you with joyful lips.

When I think of you upon my bed,
  and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

For you have been my help,
  and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

My soul clings to you;
  your right hand upholds me.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Hearer of Prayers, grant our request.

Our Father...

Prayer—Divine Protector, we recognize that Jesus frequently spent time in prayer and brought his needs to your attention. Let us bring our needs to you so that we may receive your guidance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our model. Amen.

Theme—FAITH

Explanation—Teaching ministers who live by the value of faith accept the teaching of Jesus as transmitted by the Catholic Church and cultivate a personal relationship with God.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*John 16: 1—4; 12—15*

"I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think that this is an offering of service to God. And they will do this because they have not known the Heavenly Provider, nor me. But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you of them.

"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, this one will guide you into all the truth; for the Spirit will not speak on the Spirit's own authority, but whatever the Spirit hears will be spoken, and the Spirit will declare to you the things that are to come. The Spirit will glorify me and take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Provider has is mine; therefore I said that the Provider will take what is mine and declare it to you."

Reflection—Do we accept what the Catholic Church teaches as coming from the mouth of God? Do we teach these truths with conviction?

Pause

Response—*I John 5: 5—11*

Who is it that overcomes the world
but the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ,
not with water only, but with water and blood.

And the Spirit is the witness,
because the Spirit is the truth.

There are three witnesses,
the Spirit, the water, and the blood;
and these three agree.

If we receive the testimony of people,
the testimony of God is greater;

for this is the testimony of God
that God has borne witness to the Son.

Everybody who believes in the Son of God
has this testimony within oneself.

Anyone who does not believe God
has made God a liar,
because this one has not believed in the testimony
God has borne to the Son.

And this is the testimony,
that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in the Son.

Petitions—Let pray for...

Response—Faith of Our Ancestors, hear our prayers.

Our Father...

Prayer—Reason for Our Faith, Jesus passed your message on to us through his life and his word using effective teaching strategies. Make us effective teachers so that we may pass this message on to our students and through it they will come to know you and your goodness. We ask this in the name of Jesus who is the fountain of truth. Amen.

Day 16

Theme—HOPE

Explanation—Teachers work with students on a daily basis. Therefore, the growth of students frequently appears minimal. The value of hope enables us to recognize that God's promise is unfolding in the students.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 13: 31—33*

Another parable Jesus put before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a person took and sowed in the field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

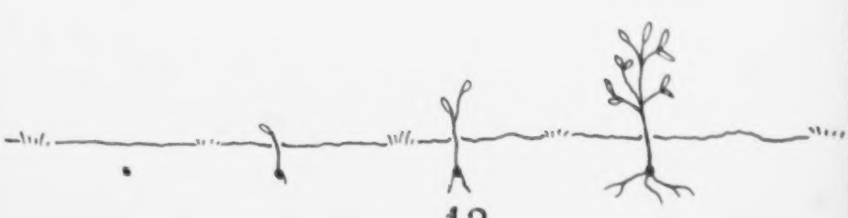
He told them another parable, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

All this Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:

"I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."

Reflection—The knowledge that we impart and the attitudes we convey to students are the mustard seeds which grow in students as they mature. Hope helps us to recognize this.

Pause



Gospel Reflection Passage—*Matthew 7: 7–12*

Ask, and it will be given to you;

seek, and you will find;

knock, and it will be opened to you.

For every one who asks receives,

and the one who seeks finds;

and the one who knocks it will be opened.

Or which of you, if the child asks for bread,
  will give a stone?

Or if the child asks for a fish,
  will give the child a serpent?

If you, then, who are evil,
  know how to give good gifts to your children,

how much more will your Provider who is in heaven
  give good things to those who ask!

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—With hope we seek your guidance and help.

Our Father...

Prayer—Hope of Every Person, each day you enable us to present to the students your truths. May the students accept your invitation to come to know you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our hope. Amen.

Day 17

Theme—LOVE

Explanation—Teachers need to love their students. This love means that teachers see in each of their students the person of Jesus. It is this love and faith that enables teachers to accept the responsibility of the teaching ministry.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

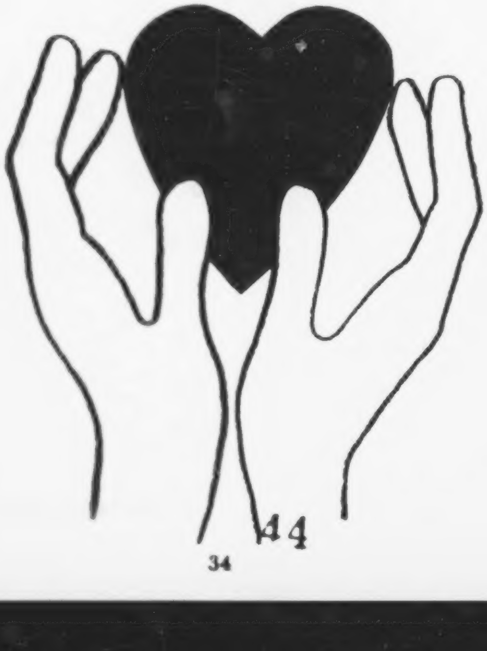
Pause

Reading—*Matthew 22: 34–40*

But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they came together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" And he said to them, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."

Reflection—Do we love God through our students? Do we love our students because we recognize God present within them?

Pause



Response—*I John 3: 1; 11; 15—16; 18; 23—24*

See what love the Father has given us,
that we should be called children of God; and so we are...

For this is the message which we have heard from the beginning,
that we should love one another...

Anyone who hates a brother or a sister is a murderer,
and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding within...

By this we know love,
that Jesus laid down his life for us;
and we ought to lay down our lives for one another...

Little children, let us not love in words or speech
but in deed and in truth...

And these are God's commandments,
that we should believe in the name of Jesus Christ
and love one another just as Jesus has commanded us.

All who keep his commandments
abide in God and God in them.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God Our Source of Love, give us your love and grant our plea.

Our Father...

Prayer—Heavenly Provider, you call us each day to help your children come to know you. Help us to recognize your presence in each of them and to do all that we can to enable these your children to come to know you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the teacher. Amen.

Day 18

Theme—VIGILANCE

Explanation—In order to help students, teaching ministers need to carefully supervise them. The vigilance of teachers frequently prevents students from acquiring bad habits.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 12: 35—44*

"Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be like people who are waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast, so that they may open at once when the knock comes. Blessed are those servants the master finds awake: truly, I say to you, the master will be girded and have them sit at the table and the master will come and serve them. If the master comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the householder had known at what hour the thief was coming, the house would not have been left to be broken into. You also must be ready; for the Son of God is coming at the unexpected hour."

Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?" And Jesus said, "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master will set over the household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant, who shall be found watching by the master in the dead of night. Truly, I say to you, the master will set this servant over all the possessions."

Reflection—How carefully do we observe our students in school? Are we able to observe our students outside of school?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 71: 1—8*

In you, O God, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame!

In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me;
incline your ear and save me!

Be you to me a rock of refuge,
a strong fortress to save me,
for you are my rock, my fortress.

Rescue me, O my God, from the hands of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel persecutor.

For you, O God, are my hope,
my trust, O God, from my youth.

Upon you, I have leaned from my birth,
you are the one who took me from my mother's womb.

My praise is continually of you.

I have been as a portent to many;
but you are my strong refuge.

My mouth is filled with your praise,
and with your glory all the day.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Divine Protector, enable us to serve you and your children.

Our Father...

Prayer—All-knowing God, you see our every act and know our every thought. Guide us to watch over our students and protect them from all harm. We ask this in the name of our risen brother, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Day 19

Theme—JUSTICE

Explanation—Students quickly determine if teachers are not just. At the same time many students remember their teachers because of their fairness in dealing with all students.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 18: 23—35*

"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But the same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in the prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Provider will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Reflection—In this story justice is moderated by the mercy of the king to the servant. However, this servant does not show the same kindness toward a fellow servant. Do we treat all our students in an equal way based upon their abilities?

Pause

Response—*Job 19: 7–11; 13, 21, 25; 27*

"Behold, I cry out, 'Violence!' but I am not answered;
I shall call aloud, but there is no justice.

Someone has walled up my way, so that I cannot pass,
and has set darkness upon my paths.

This person has stripped from me my glory,
and taken the crown from my head.

The same one breaks me down on every side, and I am gone,
and my hope has been pulled up like a tree.

This person has kindled his wrath against me,
and counts me as an adversary.

The one has put my relatives far from me,
and my acquaintances are wholly estranged from me.

Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friend,
for the hand of God has touched me!

For I know that my redeemer lives,
and at last will stand upon the earth;

and I shall see,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another."

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God of Justice, make us just and hear our prayer.

Our Father...

Prayer—Seat of Justice, Jesus enriched the concept of justice by his life and death and taught us that justice springs from love. Assist us always to model your Son in our dealings with students so they will learn firsthand the meaning of justice. We ask this in the name Jesus, our model. Amen.

Day 20

Theme—RECONCILIATION

Explanation—Some students will do things that cause teachers to become angry. Teachers who model Jesus the teacher make peace with these students.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the Name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 15: 11—32*

And Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all that he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will rise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants."' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry."

Reflection—This story illustrates the forgiveness of a parent for a child. Teachers need to act in the same way toward their students. Teachers must go out to meet the wayward students as the father went out to meet his son.

Pause

Response—*Psalm 85: 1–12*

God, you favored the land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sins.

You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from the hot anger.

Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation from us!

Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.

Let us hear what God the Almighty will speak,
God will speak peace to the people,
to saints, to those who turn to God in their hearts.

Surely salvation is at hand for those who fear,
that glory may dwell in our land.

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.

Yes, God will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God of Mercy, have mercy on us.

Our Father...

Prayer—Creator, you forgave the sin of the human race and the sin of each person through the death of your Son. Foster in us a sense of reconciliation so that we may always approach our students in openness. We ask this in the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

Day 21

Theme—COURAGE

Explanation—Sometimes teachers present a truth that is unpopular. This takes courage not to give in to the wish of a changing society.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 24: 9–14*

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because wickedness is multiplied, most people's love will grow cold. But those who endure to the end will be saved. And the gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations..."

Reflection—In this reading Jesus reminds us that we will suffer. The suffering of teachers is usually not physical suffering, rather it is frequently emotional stress. However, God is always near to help us.

Pause

Response—*Psalm 91: 5—13*

You will not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,

nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

A thousand shall fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand;
but it will not come near you.

You will only look with your eyes
and see the recompense of the wicked.

Because you have made God your refuge,
the most high your habitation,

no evil shall befall you,
no scourge come near your tent.

For God will give the angels charge of you
to guard you in all your ways.

On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.

You will tread on the lion and the viper,
the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Source of Strength, make our students strong in their faith and hear our cry.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of All Strength, Jesus prayed to you for strength the night before he died and you gave him refreshment. Provide us with the courage to proclaim your word with truth and integrity. We ask this through your Son, our protector. Amen.

Day 22

Theme—PATIENCE

Explanation—The ministry of teaching is not a glamorous ministry. We daily do the same things, work with some slow and indifferent students, and encounter some obstinate students. Patience helps us to continue to teach the truth to God's children.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

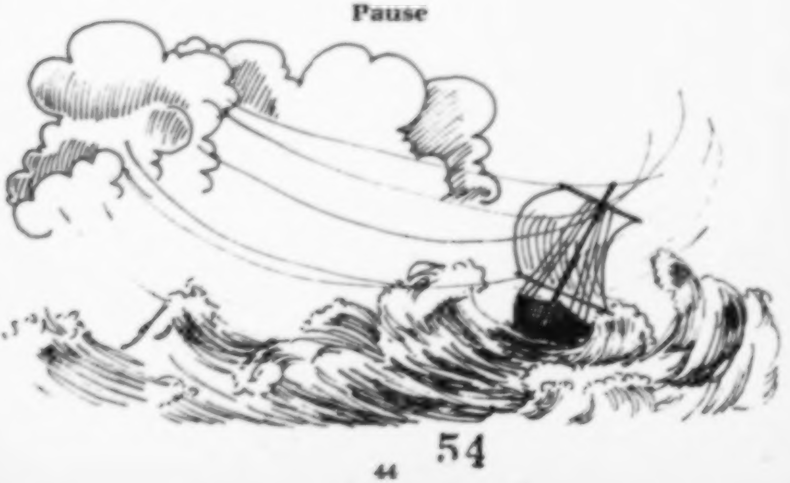
Pause

Reading—*Luke 8: 22—25*

One day Jesus got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a storm with high winds came down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and the disciples were in danger. And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; and they ceased, and there was a calm. Jesus said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even wind and water, and they obey him?"

Reflection—In this story Jesus seems to lose patience with his disciples. The story also illustrates how patience is linked to faith.

Pause



Response—*Psalm 71: 1–5; 8–9; 12; 14; 17*

In you, O God, do I take refuge;
  let me never be put to shame!

In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me;
  incline your ear to me and save me!

Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress, to save me,
  for you are my rock and my fortress.

Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,
  from the grasp of the unjust and cruel people

For you, O God, are my hope,
  my trust from my youth.

My mouth is filled with your praise,
  and with you glory all the day.

Do not cast me off in the time of old age;
  forsake me not when my strength is spent.

O God, be not far from me;
  O my God, make haste to help me!

But I will hope continually,
  and I will praise you yet more and more.

O God, from my youth you have taught me,
  and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God of All Times, listen to our request.

Our Father...

Prayer—God for whom time has no beginning or end, you and our savior Jesus are patient with your children despite their lack of faithfulness. Help us to display the same patience with our students as they seek to discover you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our brother. Amen.

Day 23

Theme—PERSEVERANCE

Explanation—Some students do not learn as quickly as we would like for them to learn. Over and over again, we repeat instructions, directions and goals. We do this day after day because repetition helps students to learn.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 18: 10—14*

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Provider who is in heaven. What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does not this person leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if it is found, truly, I say to you, the shepherd rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Protector who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

Reflection—In seeking the lost sheep (slow, indifferent or recalcitrant students), we will find them and in finding them we will find God. A great reward awaits for both lost sheep (students) and shepherds (teachers).

Pause

Gospel Reflection Passage—*Matthew 5: 3—10*

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart,
for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Creator of All Things, grant us perseverance as we seek your help.

Our Father...

Prayer—Creator of Change but Unchangeable, Jesus modeled for us perseverance by steadily setting his direction toward Jerusalem and his redemptive act. Give us the grace to remain faithful in helping those students most in need. We ask this through the shepherd of all sheep. Amen.

Day 24

Theme—ZEAL

Explanation—Teachers need to be enthusiastic in their classrooms. This zeal communicates itself to the students who then become self-motivated.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 3: 1—12*

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight."

Now John wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit that befits repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father;' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with the unquenchable fire."

Reflection—John the Baptist was completely consumed with the message of God and devoted all his efforts to preach it. Teachers need also to have great zeal in order that they do everything they can for the good of their students.

Pause

Response—*Psalm 63: 1–8*

O God, you are my God, I seek you,
my soul thirsts for you,

my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where no water is.

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.

Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.

So I will bless you as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

My soul is feasted as with marrow and fat,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

when I think of you upon my bed
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God for whom all of us long, listen to our cry.

Our Father...

Prayer—Provider of All, Jesus during his time on earth showed great zeal spreading your word as a faithful teacher of your people. Give us the zeal and enthusiasm to assist our students to come to know you and serve your church and country. We ask this in the name of Jesus the teacher. Amen.

Day 25

Theme—STUDIOUSNESS

Explanation—Teachers need to remain students all their lives. New knowledge is always being developed. Therefore, teachers should continue to study in their field.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 25: 14—30*

"For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them and made five talents more. So also the one who had the two talents made two talents more. But the one who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid the master's money. Now after a long time the master of the servants came and settled accounts with them. And the first who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' The master said, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' The second who had the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' The master said, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' The third who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I know you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But the master answered, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent, give it to the one who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and that one will have abundance; but from the person who has not, even what this one has will be taken away. And cast the worthless slave into the outer darkness; there people will weep and gnash their teeth."

Reflection—God has given teachers many different talents. However, we must use these talents wisely. Do we make genuine efforts to learn more about what we must teach and how to teach it? Do our students perceive us as studious?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 95: 1–11*

O come, let us sing to God;
  let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

Let us come with thanksgiving;
  let us make a joyful noise with songs of praise!

For our Sovereign is a great God,
  a great God above all the gods.

In God's hands are the depths of the earth;
  the heights of the mountains are God's also.

God made the sea, God's hands formed the dry lands.

O come, let us worship and bow down,
  let us kneel before God, our Maker.

For our God is,
  and we are the people of the pasture,
  and the sheep of God's hand.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Source of All Knowledge, hear our cry.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of All Knowledge, we thank you for sending Jesus to teach us the way to you. We ask that you keep our minds open in order that we may know more about you and your world. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the teacher. Amen

Day 26

Theme—PRUDENCE

Explanation—Helping students learn requires careful planning and wisdom to make many appropriate decisions each day in the classroom. Prudence helps us to have the insight to make wise choices.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 6: 25—34*

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than the food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Provider feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to your life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will God not clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your God knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of heaven and all these things shall be yours as well."

Reflection—How does prudence help us not to be anxious about things? Do we truly know all our students and plan to help each of them grow in a particular way?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 31: 1—8, 21*

In you, O God, do I seek refuge;
let me never be put to shame...

Incline your ear to me,
rescue me speedily!

Be a rock of refuge for me,
a strong fortress to save me!

Yes, you are my rock and fortress;
for your name's sake lead me and guide me...

Into your hands I commit my spirit;
you have redeemed me, O faithful God.

You hate those who pay regard to vain idols;
but I trust in you, my God.

I will rejoice and be glad for your steadfast love,
because you have seen my affliction...

and have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy;
you have set my feet in a broad place.

Blessed be God,
for wondrously showing steadfast love to me
when I was beset as in a besieged city.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Giver of Prudence, hear our prayer.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of Wisdom, Jesus provides us with a clear plan to reach you. Enable us to follow this plan and lead others to follow it by making prudent decisions along the way. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our model. Amen.

Day 27

Theme—CONFIDENCE

Explanation—Teachers need to have confidence in what they teach and to have confidence in their teaching ability.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

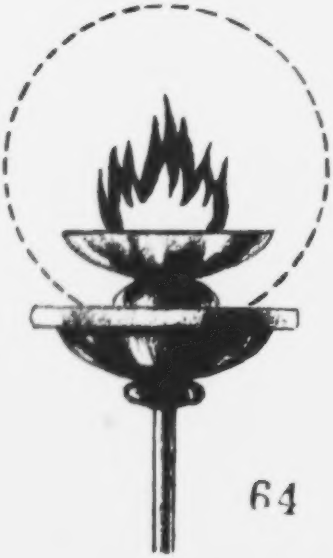
Reading—*Matthew 5: 13—16*

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden underfoot by people.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your God in heaven."

Reflection—God invites us to share in the ministry of Catholic education and gives us the graces needed for this ministry. We cooperate with God by proclaiming his word with great confidence.

Pause



Response—*Psalm 65: 1–9*

Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion;
and to you shall vows be performed, O you who hear prayers!

To you all flesh shall come on account of sins.

When our transgressions prevail over us,
you forgive them.

Blessed is the person whom you choose and bring near,
to dwell in your courts!

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,
your holy temple!

By dread deeds you answer us with deliverance,
O God of our salvation,

you are the hope of all the ends of the earth,
and of the farthest seas;

you by your strength have established the mountains,
being girded with might;

you still the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of the waves, the tumult of the peoples;

you cause those who dwell at earth's farthest bounds
to become fearful at your sign;

you make the outgoings of the morning and evening
to shout your joy.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Source of Confidence, listen to our plea.

Our Father...

Prayer—God, Source of All Wisdom, Jesus your messenger taught with authority. Give us the grace to follow your word faithfully and to proclaim it with great assurance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our source of confidence. Amen.

65

Day 28

Theme—HUMILITY

Explanation—In God's eyes teachers and students are equal since both are children of God and brothers and sisters of Jesus. At times, teachers must admit that they do not know the answers to questions that students pose. This provides an opportunity for teachers and students to work together as brothers and sisters to discover the truth. Teaching is a shared journey.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

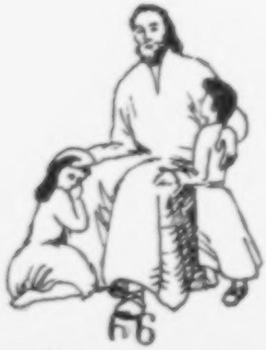
Pause

Reading—*Mark 9: 33—37*

And they came to Capernaum; and when Jesus was in the house he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" But they were silent; for on the way they were discussing with one another who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve; and he said to them, "If any person would be first, that person must be last of all and servant of all." And he took a young boy and young girl, and put them in the midst of the twelve; and lifting the arms of the boy and girl he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the one who sent me."

Reflection—In this reading Jesus reminds us that we must have the simplicity of children. Do we consider ourselves to be brothers and sisters of the students we teach?

Pause



Response—*Psalm 86: 1–12*

Incline your ear, O God, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.

You are my God; be gracious to me,
for to you do I cry all the day.

Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O God, do I lift up my soul.

For you are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.

Give ear, O God, to my prayer;
hearken to my cry of supplication.

In the day of my trouble I call on you,
and you hear me.

There is none like you among the gods,
nor are there any works like yours.

All the nations you have made shall come and bow down
before you,
and shall glorify your name.

For you are great and do wonderful things,
you alone are God.

Teach me your way, that I may walk in your truth,
direct my heart to revere your name.

I give thanks to you, my God, with my whole heart,
and I will glorify your name forever.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Model of Truth, help us to follow you.

Our Father...

Prayer—Creator, Jesus the redeemer did not deem becoming a human too low for him and he even humbled himself to die on the cross. Let us always acknowledge your help to us as we instruct your children. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our model of humility. Amen.

Day 29

Theme—JUST DISCIPLINARIAN

Explanation— Teachers need to reprimand students when they do wrong. Nevertheless, this is done with great charity and with a true concern for helping the students grow as a result of this experience.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

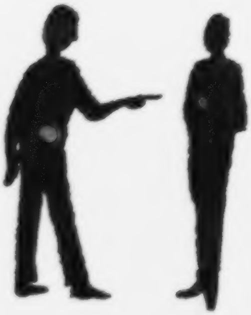
Pause

Reading— *Matthew 18: 15—18*

"If your brothers or sisters sin against you, go and tell them their fault, between you and them alone. If they listen to you you have won them back. But if they do not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If they refuse to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, let them be to you as a nonbeliever or an outcast. Truly I say to you whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by the Almighty in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Reflection— Do we try all means to lead students to see their mistakes? Do our acts of discipline enrich the students? Do we remain patient while disciplining?

Pause



Response—*Psalm 72: 1–8, 12–14*

Give the Anointed your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to those who follow!

May your people be judged with righteousness,
and your poor with justice!

Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people,
and the hills bring the message of righteousness!

May your Anointed defend the cause of the poor,
give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor!

May the Anointed live while sun endures,
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations!

May the Anointed be like rain that falls on the moss grass,
like showers that water the earth!

In these days may righteousness flourish,
and peace abound, till the moon be no more!

May the Anointed have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the rivers to the ends of the earth!

For the Anointed delivers the needy when they call,
also the poor and those who have no helper.

The Anointed has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.

From oppression and violence the Anointed saves them,
for precious is their blood in the sight of the Anointed.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God of Justice, assist us in our time of need.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of Justice, Jesus teaches us how to correct others. Give us the grace to be steadfast in our corrections and to show kindness to those needing discipline. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Anointed of God. Amen.

Day 30

Theme—GRATITUDE

Explanation—Teachers revolutionize students by replacing ignorance with knowledge. Teachers should frequently express gratitude to God for helping them in this ministry of education.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

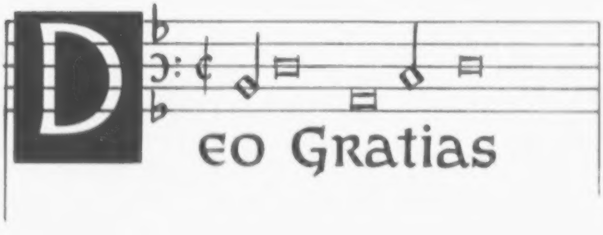
Pause

Reading—*Luke 17: 11—19*

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleaned. Then one of them on discovering the healing, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; this person fell at Jesus' feet giving him thanks. Now this person was a Samaritan. Then Jesus said, "Were not ten cleaned? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And he said to the healed leper, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Reflection—Many students are like the nine lepers. Rarely do they express their thanks to their teachers. Do we also realize that our success with students comes because God gives us the grace to touch hearts?

Pause



Response—*Psalm 66: 5—12; 20*

Come and see what God has done:
wonderful are God's deeds to the people.

God turned the sea into dry land;
our people passed through the river on foot.

There did we rejoice in God
who rules by might for ever,

whose eyes keep watch on the nations,
and does not permit the rebellious to exult in themselves.

Bless our God, O peoples,
let the sound of praise be heard,

for God has kept us among the living,
and has not let our feet slip.

For you, our God, have tested us;
you have tried us as silver is tried.

You did bring us into the net;
you did lay afflictions on us;

you did let people ride over our heads;
we went through fire and through water;

yet you have brought us forth to a spacious place.

Blessed be God, who has not rejected our prayer
or removed steadfast love from us.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Giver of All, we thank you for directing us.

Our Father...

Prayer—Giver of All Things, Jesus teaches us to render gratitude to you. We thank you for giving us your grace in our teaching ministry and for helping us to lead children to you. We thank you in union with Jesus, the model of gratitude. Amen.

Theme—HONESTY

Explanation—Teachers are required each day to make many decisions. Personal honesty helps teachers make these decisions without regard to pressures that might be placed upon them.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 22: 54—62*

Then they seized Jesus and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. Peter followed at a distance; and when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. Then a maid, seeing him as he sat in the light and gazing at him, said, "This man was also with him." But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." And a little later some one else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Friend, I am not." And after an interval of about an hour, still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean." But Peter said, "Believe me, I do not know what you are saying." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the words of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Reflection—Strong Peter denied he had knowledge of Jesus. We will also deny Jesus if we do not respond with complete honesty to each situation presented to us.

Pause

Response—*Psalm 112: 1–9*

Praise God!

Blessed are the people who fear God,
who greatly delight in God's commandments!

Their descendants will be mighty in the land;
generations of these upright persons will be blessed.

Wealth and riches are in their houses;
and righteousness endures there forever.

Light rises in the darkness for the upright;
God is gracious, merciful and righteous.

God blesses the people who deal generously and lend,
who conduct affairs with justice.

For the righteous will never be moved;
but these people will be remembered for ever.

The just fears no evil tidings;
such hearts are firm, trusting in God.

Their hearts are steady and will not be afraid,
they calmly face their adversaries.

The just have distributed freely to the poor;
those of righteousness endure forever in honor.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Jesus, model of truth, let us accept your will.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of Truth, Jesus teaches us the truth and forgives our dishonesty. Make us steadfast in our dealings with all students so that they may learn the meaning and value of fairness. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Source of Truth. Amen.

Theme—THE MYSTERY OF GOD

Explanation—While reason will lead us to conclude that God exists, God remains for us a mystery. We do not know God's plan nor why certain things are allowed to happen. However, God is revealed to us by the world, the Catholic Church and in the security of our hearts.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 1: 8—25*

Now while Zechariah was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to enter the temple of God and to burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Almighty standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear fell upon him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice in his birth; for he will be great before the Most High, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to their God, and he will lead in the spirit and power of Elijah, and turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Most High a people prepared."

And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time."

And people were waiting for Zechariah, and they wondered at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he made signs to them and remained dumb. And when the time of his service was ended he went to his home.

Reflection—The angel Gabriel revealed to Zechariah future events. However, Zechariah could not go beyond the present. Advent calls us to look to the future. Do we recognize that we form the future by teaching our students well?

Pause

Response—*Isaiah 45: 5—7; 12—13*

I am God, and there is no other,
beside me there is no God;
I gird you, though you do not know me,

that people may know from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is none beside me;
I am God, and there is no other.

I form light and create darkness,
I provide a prosperous state and create woe,
I am God, who do all these things.

I made the earth,
and created the human race upon it;

it was my hand that stretched out the heavens,
and I commanded all their host.

I have aroused them in righteousness,
and I will make straight all their ways...

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God for whom we long, lead us to you.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of Mystery, you reveal yourself to us by the prophets and by Jesus, and you continue to reveal yourself through the daily events of life. Enable us to recognize your will in all that we do and to lead our students to know you more fully. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the prophet. Amen.

Theme—FAITH IN GOD'S WORD

Explanation—Mary accepted the word of the angel without reservation because she had deep faith in God. Teachers also must have a deep faith in God's word.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 1: 26—38*

In the sixth month (of her cousin Elizabeth's pregnancy with John) the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came to her and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Most High is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be.

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?"

And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called the Son of God. And behold your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Almighty; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Reflection—Like Mary we are called to bring Jesus to others. We do this by both our teaching and our daily actions. Do we have a deep faith in God that shows through to the students?

Pause

Response—*Isaiah 11: 1—5*

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and fear of God.

And his delight shall be in the fear of God.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;

but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist,
and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Reason for Our Faith, we seek your aid.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of Our Faith, Mary, the mother of Jesus, models for us faith. Jesus demands faith from his followers. Help us to believe that you have called us to the ministry of Catholic education and that you want us to model faith for our students. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday in Advent

Theme—PROCLAIMING JESUS

Explanation—Teachers proclaim Jesus by both words and actions. Mary the mother of Jesus modeled a good teacher by preaching the Word of God and by being of service to her cousin.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 1: 39–56*

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my God should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that it would be fulfilled what was spoken to her by God." And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Most High,
  and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for you have regarded the low estate of your handmaid.
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;
  and holy is God's name.
For you show mercy to those who fear you
  from generation to generation.
You have shown strength in your arm,
  you have scattered the proud of heart;
You have put down the mighty from their thrones,
  and exalted those of low degree;
You have filled the hungry with good things,
  and the rich you have sent empty away.
You have helped your servant Israel,
  in remembrance of your mercy,
You spoke to our ancestors,
  to Abraham and to his posterity for ever."

And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her home.

Reflection—Mary's joy of the mystery in her is so great that she wishes to share it with others. Do we also take such delight in God's message and our knowledge of it that we seek to share it with our students?

Pause

Response—*Isaiah 62: 1–4*

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,

until her vindication goes forth as brightness,
and her salvation as a burning torch.

The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;

and you shall be called by a new name
which the mouth of God will give.

You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of God,
a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate;

but you shall be called My Delight...

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God, reason for our accepting the call to the teaching ministry, help us.

Our Father...

Prayer—God from whom flows all knowledge, Jesus reveals you to us and Mary knows the joy of your word. Instill in us a desire to proclaim your message to our students with the same ardor as Jesus and Mary did. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our word of life. Amen.

Theme—PRAISE OF GOD

Explanation—During Advent we recall the coming of Jesus and we prepare ourselves for his final coming. Zechariah praised God and foretold the mission of John the Baptist.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 1: 57—79*

Elizabeth gave birth to a son. And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that God had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said, "Not so; he shall be called John." And they said to her, "None of your kindred is called by this name." And they made signs to the father, inquiring what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." And they all marveled. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke blessing God.

"Blessed be the God of Israel,
  for God has visited and redeemed the people,
  and raised up a sign of salvation for us,
  in the house of David.
God spoke by the mouth of the holy prophets from of old,
  that we should be saved from our enemies,
  and from all who hate us.
God promised mercy to our ancestors,
  and established the holy covenant.
God swore this oath to Abraham,
  that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
  might serve God without fear,
  in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.
And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
  for you will prepare the way for the Promised One,
  to give knowledge of salvation to the people,
  in the forgiveness of their sins,
through the tender mercy of our God,
  when the day shall dawn upon us from on high
  to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the

shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace."

And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

Reflection—Zechariah acknowledged that all things come from God and Zechariah looked hopefully to the future of his son. Do we acknowledge that God gives us all things?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 9: 1–10*

I will give thanks to God with all my heart;
I will tell all your wonderful deeds.

I will be glad and exult in you,
I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

For you have maintained my just cause;
you have sat on the throne giving righteous judgment.

You have rebuked the nations, you have destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.

The enemies have vanished in everlasting ruins;
their cities you have uprooted;
the very memory of them has perished.

But God sits enthroned for ever,
having established a throne for judgment;

and God judges the world with righteousness,
and judges the peoples with equity...

And those who know your name put their trust in you,
for you, O God, have not forsaken those who seek you.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God of All Ages, hear our needs.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of Israel, all creatures praise you and acknowledge your gifts. Clear our vision to see your majesty, to wait confidently for you and to recognize your person in our students for in helping them we are helping you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Light of the World. Amen.

Thursday in Advent

Theme—TRUST IN GOD

Explanation—Joseph was not immediately told the great event that had taken place. Nevertheless he trusted in God. Advent is a time to renew our trust in God.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 1: 18—25*

Now the birth of Jesus took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of God appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

And all this took place to fulfill what the Most High had spoken by the prophet:

> "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel (which means, God with us)."

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of God commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

Reflection—Teachers are like St. Joseph, they sometimes do not know all the information. We need to trust God and trust our students so that God's plan for each of them can be realized.

Pause

Response—*Isaiah 52: 7—10*

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who
bring good tidings,

who publishes peace, who brings good tidings,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

Hark, your watchmen lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy;

for eye to eye they see
the return of their God to Zion.

Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem;

for God has comforted the people,
God has redeemed Jerusalem.

God has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;

and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God of Hope, with great confidence we seek your blessings.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of Trust, you continue to be the source of our trust. Help us also to trust our students and lead them to trust you. We ask this in the name of Jesus who is our trust. Amen.

83

Theme—PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF JESUS

Explanation—Jesus came on earth as a human person. He has promised that he will come again in glory to bring all his people to God. Advent provides us with a time to recall this truth and to prepare for the coming of Jesus.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 24: 3—14*

As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" And Jesus answered them, "Take heed that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places; all this is but the beginning of the birth-pang.

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because wickedness is multiplied, most people's love will grow cold. But those who endure to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come."

Reflection—Some students try to deceive us and we are misunderstood by other students. How do we handle these situations? How do we prepare our students for Jesus' coming?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 17: 1–9*

I will give thanks to God with my whole heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

I will be glad and exult in you,
I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

When my enemies turned back,
they stumbled and perished before you.

For you have maintained my just cause;
you have sat on the throne giving righteous judgments.

You have rebuked the nations, you destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.

The enemies have vanished in everlasting ruins;
their cities you have rooted out;
the very memory of them has perished.

But God sits enthroned for ever,
God has established the throne for judgment;

God judges the world with righteousness,
and judges the peoples with equity.

God is a stronghold for the oppressed,
stronghold in time of trouble.

And those who know your name put their trust in you
for you, O God, have not forsaken those who seek you.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God for whom we long, listen to our petitions.

Our Father...

Prayer—Desire of All of Us, during Jesus' time on earth he provided us with many teachings and warnings. Help us to overcome all obstacles and lead ourselves and our students to come to know and follow you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our strength. Amen.

Theme—JUDGMENT

Explanation—When Jesus comes again all peoples will be judged. Advent provides a time when we can prepare for this coming.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 25: 31—45*

"When the Son of the Most High comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those at the right hand,

"'Come, O blessed of God, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you to drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you.'

"And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers or sisters, you did it to me.'

"Then he will say to those on his left side, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and those who follow the source of evil; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink. I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

"Then they will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister to you?'

"Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these you did it not to me.'"

Reflection—We must examine how well we follow Jesus. We must also lead our students to examine how well they follow Jesus.

Pause

Response—*Psalm 24: 1—10*

The earth is God's and the fullness thereof,
 the world and those who dwell therein;

for God has founded it upon the seas,
 and established it upon the rivers.

Who shall ascend the hill to God?
 And who shall stand in the holy place?

The person who has clean hands and a pure heart,
 who does not lift up the soul to what is false,

This person will receive blessings,
 and vindication from the God of salvation.

Lift up your heads, O gates!
 and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
 that the King of glory may come in.

Who is the King of glory?
 the God, strong and mighty, the God mighty in battle!

Lift up your heads, O gates!
 and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
 that the King of glory may come in.

Who is the King of Glory?
 The God of host is the King of glory.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Source of Justice, hear our cry for help.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of Justice, Jesus shows us what you expect from us to gain our salvation. Lead us to practice what Jesus taught by feeding our students with wisdom, quenching their thirst for knowledge, and clothing them with sensitivity to others. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the giver of wisdom. Amen.

Christmas, December 25

Theme—ACCEPTANCE OF POOR STUDENTS

Explanation—The birth of Jesus illustrates two aspects of poverty: Jesus assumed the form of a human being (poverty of spirit) and Jesus was born in a stable (physical poverty).

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 2: 1—14*

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. And all went to be enrolled, all to their own cities. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the City of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house of the lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of God appeared to them, and the glory of God shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find the babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among people of good will."

Reflection—Do we accept students who are poor in spirit (e.g., slow, handicapped, learning disabled) as if they were Jesus? Do we accept students who are economically poor as if they were Jesus?

Pause

Response—*Isaiah 9: 1—2; 5—8*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
  those who dwell in the land of deep darkness,
  on them a light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation,
  you have increased its joy;
  they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,
  as people rejoice when they divide spoils.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
  and the government will be upon his shoulder,
  and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor,
  Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore.

The zeal of the God of hosts will do this.

God has sent a word against Jacob,
  and it will light upon Israel;
  and all the people will know.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Lover of the Poor, hear the cry of the poor and respond to our plea.

Our Father...

Prayer—O God, today we recall the gift of your Son to us. He who created the world subjected himself to all the weaknesses of the human race. Motivate us to seek out the poorest of our students in order to help them in body, mind and soul. We ask this in the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

89

St. Stephen, December 26

Theme—FIDELITY TO THE WORD OF GOD

Explanation—St. Stephen is considered the first martyr in the Catholic Church. He faithfully taught the good news of the Gospel no matter what others said.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Acts 6: 8—15 and Acts 7: 1; 51—60*

And Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue...arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand his wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated people, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God...This man never ceases to speak words against the holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us." And gazing at him, all who sat in council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

And the high priest said, "Is this so?" And Stephen said:

> "You stiff-necked people, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your ancestors did, so do you. And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered."

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth against him. For he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of God standing at the right hand of God."

But they cried out with a loud voice and and rushed together upon him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. They were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He knelt down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Reflection—Stephen had a deep understanding and love of the Gospel message. As teachers we should also have deep understanding and affection for the Word of God. Do we communicate these attitudes to our students?

Pause

Response—*I John: 5–12*

Who is it that overcomes the world
but the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ,
not with water only but with water and blood.

And the Spirit is the witness,
because the Spirit is the truth.

There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; these three agree.

If you receive the testimony of humans,
the testimony of God is greater;

for this is the testimony of God
that one has borne witness to the Son.

The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony.

The one who does not believe God has made God a liar,
because that person has not believed the testimony
that God has borne to the Son.

And this is the testimony,
that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in the Son.

The one who has the Son has life;
the one who has not the Son of God has not life.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Source of Knowledge, hear our prayer.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of Faith, your Son, Stephen and all the martyrs died because of their deep faith in your revealed word. Deepen in us this faith and help us to nurture this faith in our students. We ask this in the name of the Word of God. Amen.

Holy Innocents, December 28

Theme—THE INNOCENCE OF CHILDREN

Explanation—Children are innocent and sometimes they suffer because of what adults do.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 2: 16—18*

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the visitors from the East, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the travelers from the East. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

> "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more."

Reflection—Have we ever done, even unintentionally, something to hurt a student? Do we try to model the affection that Jesus had for children? Do we know what to do if children are being mistreated by others?

Pause

Response—*Sirach 7: 1–3; 23; 27–28; 30; 32–36*

My children, do not sow the furrows of injustice,
and you will not reap a seven fold crop.

Do you have children? Discipline them,
and make them obedient from their youth.

With all your heart honor your father,
and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother.

Remember that through your parents you were born;
and what can you give back to them that equals their gift to you?

With all your might love your Maker,
and do not forsake the ministry.

Stretch forth your hand to the poor,
so that your blessing may be complete.

Give graciously to all the living,
and withhold not kindness from the dead.

Do not fail those who weep,
but mourn with those who mourn.

Do not shrink from visiting a sick person,
because for such deeds you will be loved.

In all you do, remember the end of your life,
and then you will never die.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Lover of Children, hear our call for help.

Our Father...

Prayer—Parent of All of Us, Jesus shows a special love for children and children were the first to die for Jesus. Instill in us a great love for our students and help this love to manifest itself by a genuine concern for them. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the child of God. Amen.

Theme—ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN EDUCATION

Explanation—The family provides the first education to children. The family is the primary teacher for the first several years of children's lives. The family remains a prime influence on children throughout their lives.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 2: 13—15; 19—23*

Now when the visitors from the East had departed, behold, an angel of God appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what God had spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of God appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Reflection—Much of what Jesus humanly learned he had been taught by Mary and Joseph. Do we recognize the role that the family plays in the life of our students? Do we reach out to those students who have problems at home?

Pause

Response—*Sirach 3: 2—6; 11—14*

For God honored the father above the children,
and the right of the mother over the sons was confirmed.

Whoever honors the father atones for sins,
and whoever glorifies the mother is like one who lays up treasure.

Whoever honors the father will be gladdened by children,
and that person's prayers will be heard.

Whoever glorifies the father will have a long life,
and whoever obeys God will refresh the mother;

such a one will serve the parents as masters.

For a person's glory comes from honoring the father,
and it is a disgrace for children not to respect their mothers.

O children, help your parents in their old age,
and do not grieve them as long as they live;

even if they are lacking in understanding, show forbearance;
in all your strength do not despise them.

For kindness to a parent will not be forgotten.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Creator of the Family, help all families and hear our request.

Our Father...

Prayer—Holy Trinity, you are the model of love that should exist among all family members. You also gave us a concrete example of your love in the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Help us to love deeply our family and model for our students a good family life. We ask this through the intercession of the Holy Family. Amen.

Theme—ACCEPTANCE OF GOD'S WORD

Explanation—Epiphany means showing. On this day we recall how Jesus' role was manifested by a star to the Gentiles from the East, by the voice of the God at the baptism of the Son, and by the miracle of Cana. Jesus is our king, priest and prophet.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 2: 1—12; Mark 1: 9—11; John 2: 2—11*

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise people from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him..." Herod summoned the wise people secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem... When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold, and frankincense and myrrh.

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens open and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Jesus was also invited to the marriage. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "My hour has not yet come..." Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water, draw some out and take it to the steward of the feast." When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "You kept the good wine until now."

Reflection—Jesus shows himself in the Gospel, in the Church and in the students we teach. Do we recognize and accept him?

Pause

Response—*Isaiah 60: 1—6*

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of God has risen upon you.

For behold darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;

but God will arise upon you
and God's glory will be seen upon you.

And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Lift up your eyes round about, and see;
they all gather together, they come to you;

your sons shall come from afar,
and your daughters shall be carried in their arms.

Then you shall see and be radiant,
your heart shall thrill and rejoice.

A multitude of camels shall come to you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense,
and shall proclaim the praise of God.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God present in all people, hear our prayer.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of Light, you have manifested your Son to us through the light of a star, a voice from a cloud, and in the blushing of the water made wine. Help us to see your Son through the lives of our students. We ask this in the name of the one manifested. Amen.

Theme—ATTACHMENT TO JESUS

Explanation—During life teachers will experience moments of joy and sadness. If teachers are committed to follow Jesus, the moments of sadness will be turned to joy.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*John 12: 12—19*

The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt!"

His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this great thing. The Pharisees then said to one another, "You see that you can do nothing; look, the world has gone after him."

Reflection—The crowd that praised Jesus on Sunday would call for his death a few days later because they were not committed to his teachings. Do we accept the Gospel message? Do we teach it to our students?

Pause

Response—*Isaiah 53: 2—7*

For he grew up like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;

he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by the people;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;

Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;

yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
and with his stripes we are healed.

And we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way;

and God has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;

like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb,
so he opened not his mouth.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Jesus, our Savior, hear our prayers.

Our Father...

Prayer—Fountain of Love, today we see Jesus entering Jerusalem and recall the ancient prophesy of his death. Make us daily grow more deeply in our attachment to you and willingness to lead others to you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the lamb who was slain. Amen.

Theme—REPENTANCE

Explanation—True repentance comes from a change in the interior disposition of people.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 23: 23—32*

"Woe to you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe herbs and spices, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith... You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. You blind Pharisee! First cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside may also be clean.

"Woe to you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to people, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you build tombs for prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' Thus you witness against yourselves, because you are the children of those who murdered the prophets."

Reflection—Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees because they did not truly reform. Do we seek true conversion of ourselves and of our students?

Pause

Response—*Isaiah 38: 13—20*

I cry for help until morning;
like a lion you break all my bones;
from day to night you bring me to an end.

Like a swallow or a crane I clamor,
I moan like a dove.

My eyes are weary with looking upward.
O God, I am oppressed; be my security!

But what can I say? For you have spoken to me,
and you yourself have done it.

Oh, restore me to health and make me live!

Lo, it was for my welfare
that I had great bitterness;

but you have held back my life
from the pit of destruction,

for you have cast all my sins behind your back.

For Sheol cannot thank you,
death cannot praise you;

those who go down to the pit cannot hope
for your faithfulness.

Petitions—Let us pray for ...

Response—God of Mercies, have mercy on our students and hear our prayer.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of Mercy, you give us these forty days to examine ourselves in light of your revealed word. Instill in us a true spirit of repentance and help us to move the hearts of our students to true repentance. We ask this in the name of him who died for our forgiveness. Amen.

101

Theme—SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE

Explanation—Jesus provides the model of sacrifice. To be a Christian means to be willing to sacrifice for others. Teachers sacrifice for their students.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

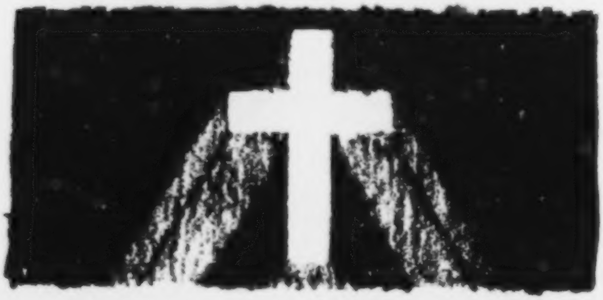
Reading—*Mark 8: 31—33 and Mark 10: 32—34*

And Jesus began to teach them that the Son of the Most High must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but you are a temptation to me..."

And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve aside, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, "Behold we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of the Almighty will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three day he will rise."

Reflection—Jesus knew he had to suffer and die. Do we realize that at times our ministry of education will cause us to suffer? Do we believe that Jesus will always be with us?

Pause



Response—*I Peter 2: 21–24*

For to this you have been called,
because Christ also suffered for you,
leaving you an example,
that you should follow in his steps.

He committed no sin;
no guile was found on his lips.

When he was reviled,
he did not revile in return;

when he suffered, he did not threaten;
but he trusted to him who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree,
that we might die to sin and live in righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed.

For you were straying like sheep,
but have now returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God Our Provider, make beneficial our sacrifices for our students and hear our requests.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of Courage, Lent is given to us each year to renew ourselves by personal reflection, fasting and works of sacrifice. Make us examples of the spirit of sacrifice so our students may come to know its true meaning. We ask this in the name of Jesus the eternal sacrifice. Amen.

Theme—SPIRIT OF DETACHMENT

Explanation—Teachers stand in the shadow of their students. Teachers rejoice in the success of their students and are not jealous of their successes.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 26: 14 ... 50 and Matthew 27: 3—10*

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I deliver him to you?" And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

When it was evening, Jesus sat at the table with the twelve disciples; and as they were eating, he said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." And they were sorrowful and began to say to him, "Is it I, Lord?" He answered, "He, who has dipped his hand in the dish with me, will betray me. It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Is it I, Master?" He said to him, "You have said so."

Later that night, while Jesus was still speaking to his disciples, Judas came and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I shall kiss is the man; seize him." Judas came up to Jesus, kissed him and said, "Hail, Master!" Jesus said to him, "Friend, why are you here?" Then the others laid hands on Jesus and seized him.

The next day when Judas saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, Judas departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money." So they bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Thus was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set, and gave them for the potter's field."

Reflection—The story of Judas illustrates one who sought personal gain rather than assisting others. Do we put the welfare of our students before our own concerns?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 52: 1–9*

Why do you boast of mischief done against the godly?
All day long you are plotting destruction.

Your tongue is like a sharp razor,
you worker of treachery.

You love evil more than good,
and lying more than speaking the truth.

But God will break you down forever;
the Almighty will snatch and tear you from your tent;
the just one will uproot you from the land of the living.

The righteous shall see and fear,
and shall laugh saying,

"See the one who would not take refuge in God,
but trusted in the abundance of riches,
and sought refuge in wealth!"

But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.
I trust in the steadfast love of God for ever.

I will thank you for ever, because you have done it.
I will proclaim your name.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Loving God, assist us in our time of need.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of Life, our hearts long for you and will not rest until they rest in you. Help us to put aside our own personal concerns in order to lead students to you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the model of detachment. Amen.

Theme—APPRECIATION FOR THE EUCHARIST

Explanation—During Lent we examine ourselves. The Eucharist is the highest form of our worship of God for it re-enacts the mystery of our salvation through the death of Jesus.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*I Corinthians 11: 23—29*

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine oneself and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks self-judgment.

Reflection—Do we regularly attend the Eucharist? Do we seek to deepen our understanding of it? Do we encourage our students to attend the Eucharist regularly?

Pause

Response—"Sing My Tongue" St. Thomas Acquinas

Sing my tongue, the Savior's glory
Of his flesh the mystery sing;
Of the blood all price exceeding,
Shed by our immortal King,
Destined for the world's redemption,
From a noble womb to spring.

Of a pure and spotless Virgin
Born for us on earth below,
He, as man with others conversing,
Stayed, the seeds of truth to sow;
Then he closed in solemn order
Wondrously His life of woe.

On the night of that last supper
Seated with his chosen band,
He, the pascal victim eating,
First fulfills the Law's command;
Then as food to all his people
Gives himself with his own hand.

Word made Flesh, the bread of nature
By His word to Flesh He turns;
Wine into His Blood He changes,
Although eye no change discerns.
While the minds seek truth earnestly,
Faith gives what the minds may spurn.

Down in adoration falling,
Lo! the sacred Host we hail;
Lo! o'er ancient forms departing,
newer rites of grace prevail;
Faith for all defects supplying
where the feeble senses fail.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—O Holy One, attend to our need.

Our Father...

Prayer—Food for All, we recall the institution of the Eucharist and we appreciate this memorial of Jesus' sacrifice. Lead us to love the Eucharist and to direct students to it. We ask this in the name of Jesus who gave us his body as food. Amen.

Theme—FORGIVENESS

Explanation—The death of Jesus won for the human race the forgiveness of the sin of Adam and the forgiveness of all our personal sins.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 23: 26–46*

And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. And there followed him a great multitude of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place which is called The Skulls, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments. And the people stood by, watching; but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him vinegar, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you today you will be with me in Paradise."

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.

Reflection—Even while Jesus was suffering he found time to teach and comfort others. Do we provide comfort and forgiveness to our students?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 51: 1–11*

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;

according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned,
and done that which is evil in your sight,

Behold, you desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Fill me with joy and gladness;
let the bones which you have broken rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Jesus Our Savior, have mercy on us.

Our Father...

Prayer—Forgiver of All Sins, we recall that Jesus suffered and died to atone for our sins. Help us to be contrite for our sins and forgive those people who may have harmed us. We ask this in the name of our Eternal Redeemer. Amen.

Theme—INTERIOR PEACE

Explanation—Following Jesus will require sacrifice. However, it will also bring peace of mind.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 23: 47–56*

Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, and said, "Certainly this man was innocent!" And all the multitude who assembled to see the sight, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance and saw these things.

Now there was a man named Joseph from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their purpose and deed, and he was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud, and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how his body was laid; then they returned and prepared spices and ointments.

On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Reflection—Jesus had finished his work and returned to God. Can we voice a sense of accomplishment for our work of Christian education?

Pause

Gospel Reflection Passage—*John 17: 1, 4—6; 12; 19—20, 24*

Almighty One, the hour has come;
glorify your child that your child may glorify you.

I glorified you on earth,
having accomplished the work you gave me to do.

And now glorify me in your own presence
with the glory which I had with you before the world was made.

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world;
they were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you gave me;
I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

And for their sake I consecrate myself,
that they also may be consecrated in truth.

I do not pray for these only,
but also for those who believe in me through their word,

that they may all be one;
even as you are in me and I in you,

that they also may be in us,
so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Petition—Let us pray for...

Response—God, Comforter of All, listen to our plea.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of Consolation, Jesus faithfully carried out your command. Help us to follow in his path and by so doing come to know you and lead others to you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our hope. Amen.

Theme—JOY IN THE TRUTH

Explanation—Easter is the greatest of all Christian feasts. Jesus proved his word by dying on the cross to save the human race and was raised to life on Easter. The joy of Easter is grounded in the words and actions of Jesus.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 27: 62—66 and Matthew 28: 1—8*

Next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore order the sepulcher to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worst than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." So they went and made the sepulcher secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

Now after the sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the sepulcher. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of God descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. The angel's appearance was like lightning and the raiment white as snow. And for fear of the angel the guards trembled and became like dead people. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen, as he said. Come, and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before them to Galilee; there you will see him."

Reflection—The women were filled with great joy and ran and told the disciples. Do we ministers of Catholic education find joy in Jesus' message and run to share the good news?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 118: 1–2; 15–18; 21–25*

O give thanks to the Almighty for the goodness
shown to us;
God's steadfast love endures for ever!

The right hand of God does valiantly,
the right hand of God is exalted,
the right hand of God does valiantly!

I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the Almighty.

The Most High has chastened me sorely,
but God has not given me over to death.

I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the head of the corner.

This is the Almighty's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day which the Most High has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we beseech you, O God!
O God, we beseech you, give us success!

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Source of Joy, make our students faithful and hear our prayer.

Our Father...

Prayer—Giver of Life and Light, your Son rose from the dead on this day and prefigured our own resurrection. Help us to take joy in your word and to speak it clearly to others. We ask this in the name of your Son and our hope. Amen.

Theme—FIDELITY TO THE TRUTH

Explanation—In the brief passage from St. Matthew that follows, we read of the chief priests' devious efforts to conceal the truth of the resurrection and of Jesus' command to teach the truth to all people.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

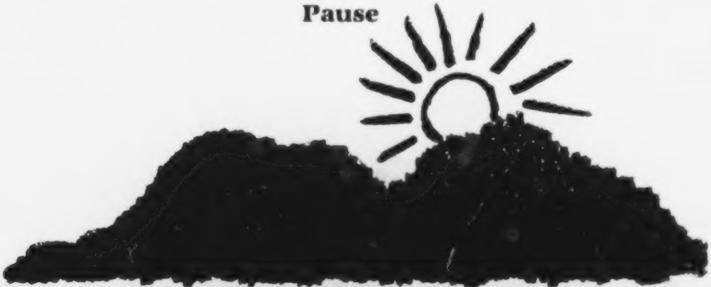
Reading—*Matthew 28: 11—20*

While the women were going to tell the disciples of Jesus' resurrection, behold, some of the guards went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sum of money to the soldiers and said, "Tell the people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. So they took the money and did as they were directed; and this story has been spread to this day."

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and remember, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Reflection—Do we hold fast to the truths of the Gospel? Do we repel all efforts to disguise the truth? Do we present the message of the Gospel to all the students?

Pause



Response—*Psalm 33: 1—9; 18—22*

Rejoice in God, O you righteous!
Praise befits the upright.

Sing to God a new song,
play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

For the word of the Most High is upright;
and all God's work is done in faithfulness.

God loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Holy One.

By the word of the Almighty the heavens were made,
and all their hosts by the breath of God's mouth.

Let all the earth fear God,
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe!

For the Almighty spoke, and it came to be,
commanded, and it stood forth.

Our soul waits for God,
who is our help and shield.

Yes, God gladdens our heart
because we trust in his holy name.

Let your steadfast love, O God, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Source of Truth, make us faithful to your word and grant our request.

Our Father...

Prayer—Fountain of Truth, Jesus taught the truth at all times, with authority and to all people. Enable us to comprehend more fully the truth so that we may be faithful and courageous in proclaiming it unfailingly to our students. We ask this in the name of Jesus, teacher of truth. Amen.

Theme—ACCEPTANCE OF THE TRUTH

Explanation—The reading from Mark shows that the first to arrive at the empty tomb were unable to comprehend the angels message. Their senses barred them from responding to the faith that was demanded of them.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Mark 16: 1–8*

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought spices, so that they might go and anoint the body of Jesus. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a youth sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And the young messenger said to them, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you." And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid.

Reflection—Is the message of the Gospel so radical that some of today's students have difficulty accepting it? What do we do to make this message clear? Do our students see the alleluia message lived in our lives? How do we help our students to live out the Gospel in their daily lives?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 63*

O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you;
my soul faints for you, as in a dry land where no water is.

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.

Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you

So I will bless you as long as I shall live;
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

I think of you in quiet times,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings, I sing for joy.

My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

But those who seek to destroy my life
shall go down into the depths of the earth.

But the others shall rejoice in God;
all who swear by the Almighty shall receive glory.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Source of Truth, help our students and hear our prayer.

Our Father...

Prayer—Giver of the Gift of Faith, you revealed yourself through the teachings of the ancient prophets, your Son, your Church and in the hearts of each person. Help us to become deeply attached to your word and to do all that we can to help our students accept the truth. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the teacher of truth. Amen.

Wednesday in Easter Time

Theme—GROWING IN THE TRUTH

Explanation—The Easter stories reveal the women and disciples as deeply amazed by the resurrection of Jesus. Initially they could not grasp the meaning of this fact, an angel had to explain to them the meaning of the empty tomb. Gradually their faith in the resurrection deepened.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 24: 1—12*

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two messengers stood by them in dazzling apparel; and as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the messengers said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? Remember how Jesus told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of God must be delivered into the hands of sinful people, and be crucified, and on the third day rise." And they remembered these words, and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told this to the apostles; but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

Reflection—The message of the Gospel is so profound that young children cannot be expected to learn it immediately. Our task as teachers is to expose this message at a pace that is appropriate for the age of the students. Are we conscious of helping students mature in the faith?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 18: 1—3; 22—28; 35—36*

I love you, O God, my strength.

The Most High is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer,
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

I call upon the Almighty, who is worthy to be praised,
and I am saved from my enemies.

For all of God's ordinances were before me,
and the statues I did not put away from me.

I was blameless before the Most High,
and I kept myself from guilt.

Therefore God has recompensed me according to my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my hands.

For you, the Most High, deliver a humble people;
but the haughty you bring down.

Yes, the Almighty lights my lamp;
God lightens my darkness.

You, the Most High, have given me the shield of my salvation,
and your right hand supports me, and your help makes me great.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Guider of Lives, listen to our prayer.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of True Nourishment, your Son modeled for us how to expose students to the truth when he used stories, comparisons, and explanations to illustrate the truth. Enlighten us to use the right method that will touch the hearts of the students so they will come to know you more clearly. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our teacher. Amen.

Theme—PRESENTING THE TRUTH

Explanation—The story of the two disciples meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus illustrates good teaching. Jesus accepts the teachable moment and uses the recent events to explain in a systematic way all of salvation history.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 24: 13—32*

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see." And Jesus said to them, "O foolish people, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. So they drew near to the village where they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?"

Reflection—Do we help students associate Gospel values with current events? Do we present all our lessons in a logical developmental manner?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 25: 1–9*

To you, O God, I lift up my soul.

O my God, in you I trust, let me not be put to shame;
  let not my enemies exult over me.

Yes, let none that wait for you be put to shame;
  let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

Make me know your ways, O God;
  teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
  for you are the God of my salvation;
  for you I wait all the day long.

Be mindful of your mercy, O God,
  and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Remember not the sins of my youth, or my transgressions;
  according to your steadfast love remember me,
  for your goodness' sake, O God.

God leads the humble in what is right,
  and teaches the humble right ways.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Divine Teacher, answer our petition.

Our Father...

Prayer—Giver of Knowledge, Jesus modeled for us all his earthly life the characteristics of a good teacher. Motivate us to examine the Gospel to discover these traits and give us the grace to use these qualities in instructing our students. We ask this in the name of our teacher, Jesus. Amen.

Theme—CONFIDENCE IN THE TRUTH

Explanation—Jesus always taught clearly and had confidence in himself and his message. This confidence inspired others to follow him.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 24: 36—49*

As the disciples were talking about the things that had happened, Jesus himself stood among them. But they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit. Jesus said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do questions rise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have." And while they still disbelieved they also experienced joy and wonder, Jesus said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of boiled fish, and he took it and ate it before them.

Then Jesus said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to these things. And behold, I send the promise of God upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Reflection—Do we have confidence in what we do? Do we display confidence in the message of the Gospel? Do our actions as well as our words lead students to Jesus?

Pause

Response—*Sirach 14: 20—28*

Blessed is the person who meditates on wisdom
and who reasons intelligently.

The person who reflects on wisdom's ways
will also ponder its secrets.

One should pursue wisdom like a hunter,
and lie in wait on its paths.

The person who peers through wisdom's windows
will also listen at its doors;

the one who encamps near wisdom's house
will also fasten tent pegs to wisdom's walls;

this person will pitch a tent near wisdom,
and will lodge in an excellent lodging place;

this person's children will be placed under wisdom's shelter,
and will camp under its boughs;

wisdom will shelter them from the heat,
and they will dwell in the midst of wisdom's glory.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Holy One, we have confidence you will hear us.

Our Father...

Prayer—God, Our Confidence, Jesus inspires his disciples with confidence by his teaching. Deepen in us a love for your truth and enable us to proclaim it without reservation. We ask this in the name of Jesus who taught with authority. Amen.

Theme—REWARD FOR FOLLOWING THE TRUTH

Explanation—In this story Jesus looks to people in future ages and praises them for their belief. This promise of eternal life should help us to pursue truth.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*John 20: 19—29*

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw Jesus. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my fingers in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe."

Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and My God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

Reflection—Jesus is the source of faith. Our faith in Jesus is manifested by how we act to others. Do we act in a manner that our students see us witnessing to Jesus?

Pause

Response—*Sirach 6: 18—37*

My child from your youth you choose instruction,
and until you are old you will find wisdom.

Wisdom seems very harsh to the uninstructed;
a weakling will not remain.

For wisdom is like its name,
and not manifested to many.

Come to wisdom with your whole soul,
and keep the ways of wisdom with all your might.

Search out and seek, and wisdom will become known to you;
when you get hold of wisdom, do not let it go.

If you are willing, my child, you will be taught,
and if you apply yourself, you will become clever.

If you listen, you will gain knowledge,
and if you incline your ear, you will become wise.

Be ready to listen to every narrative,
and do not let wise proverbs escape you.

Reflect on the statues of God,
and meditate at all times on the commandments.

God will give insight to your mind,
and your desire for wisdom will be granted.

Petitions— Let us pray for...

Response—Source of Wisdom, enlighten our students and hear our petition.

Our Father...

Prayer—Giver of All Gifts, Jesus promises eternal happiness to those who believe in him. Make us faithful to his teaching, help us to lead our students to him so we may join his fellowship forever. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our hope. Amen.

Ascension Thursday

Theme—PLANTING THE SEED

Explanation—Jesus ascended into heaven in order that the Holy Spirit could come upon the disciples. This small group of followers were to be the foundation on which, through the action of the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church would be built and spread throughout the world. Catholic educators continue to foster this growth.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Acts 1: 1—13*

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Almighty, which he said, "You heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

So when they had come together they asked him, "Master, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" Jesus said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the authority of the Most High has fixed. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." And when he had said this as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two messengers stood by them in white robes, and said, "People of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away; and when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Reflection--We teachers plant the seed of the Gospel message in the minds of our students. When we finish teaching our students, do we pray that the Holy Spirit will make clear to our students what we have taught them?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 110: 1–4*

The Almighty says to my master:
"Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool."

The Almighty sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter.
Rule in the midst of your foes!

Your people will offer themselves freely
on the day you lead your hosts upon the holy mountains.

From the womb of the morning
like dew your youth will come to you.

The Lord has sworn and will not change,
"You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Spirit of God, enlighten all of us and hear our request.

Our Father...

Prayer—Divine Enlightener, you give all of us free will, understanding and the message of Jesus in order that we might return to you. Help us to foster in our students the desire to seek you and follow the Gospel message. Remind us also to regularly pray that our students may be open to your enlightenment. We ask this in the name of Jesus who goes before us to prepare a place for us. Amen.

Theme—ENLIGHTENMENT BY THE SPIRIT

Explanation—After Jesus ascended into heaven, his disciples were afraid. However, once the Holy Spirit enlightened them, they no longer feared but they began teaching with great confidence.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Acts 2: 1—8; 12; 14; 22—24; 33—34*

When the day of Pentecost had come, the apostles were altogether in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout people from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in one's own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God?" And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, "People of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless people. But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it...Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from God the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear."

Reflection—Do we frequently reflect about our ministry? Do we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit on our work? Do we ask the Holy Spirit to bring to the minds of our students an understanding of the truth which we present to them?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 111: 1—11*

I will give thanks to God with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright in the congregation.

Great are the works of God,
studied by all who have pleasure in them.

Full of honor and majesty is God's work,
and God's righteousness endures for ever.

God has caused the wonderful works to be remembered;
God is gracious and merciful.

God provides food for those who fear;
God is ever mindful of his covenant.

God has shown the people power,
in giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of God's hands are faithful and just;
all God's precepts are trustworthy,

they are established for ever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

God sent redemption to the people;
God has given the covenant for ever.

The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom;
a good understanding have all those who practice it.

God's praise endures for ever.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Holy Spirit, enlighten us and hear our plea.

Our Father...

Prayer—Spirit of Truth, Jesus promised to stay with us by sending the Holy Spirit to us. Make us receptive to the Spirit and enlighten the minds and hearts of our students. We ask this in the name of the Jesus, Spirit of Truth. Amen.

January 4 Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Theme—ZEAL FOR SPREADING THE GOSPEL

Explanation—Elizabeth Bailey was born in New York in 1774 to a distinguished Episcopalian family. Twenty years later she married William Seton and they had five children. They moved to Italy because of the poor health of William. Shortly after his death, Elizabeth made her profession of faith in the Catholic Church, 1805. Returning to the United States she suffered the rejection of her family and friends because of her conversion. In 1808 she opened her first school and the following year founded a community of teaching sisters who spread throughout the Northeast. She died in 1821.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*John 4: 5—15; 25—26; 28—30*

So Jesus came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, sat down beside the well...There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me to drink." For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and whom it is that is saying to you, 'Give me to drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get the living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?" Jesus said to her, "Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give will never thirst; the water that I shall give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw..." The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming and when he comes, he will show us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he..." So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city, and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" They went out of the city and were coming to him.

Reflection—In this story Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan women led to her conversion and to her spreading the Good News. Do we have the same zeal to spread the Gospel message?

Pause

Response—*Sirach 7: 32—40*

Stretch forth your hand to the poor,
so that your blessing may be complete.

Give graciously to all the living,
and withhold not kindness from the dead.

Do not fail those who weep,
but mourn with those who mourn.

Do not shrink from visiting a sick person,
because for such a deed you will be loved.

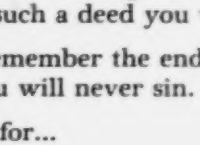
In all you do, remember the end of your life,
and then you will never sin.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Giver of Faith, increase our faith.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of All Our Desires, Elizabeth Ann Seton showed her desire for you by studying your revealed word, manifested a love for you by instructing students, and sought to continue her work by founding a religious community. Motivate us with the same zeal to assist our students. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our true desire. Amen.



Theme—CONCERN FOR OTHERS

Explanation—John Neumann came to the United States from Bohemia. He was ordained a priest in New York in 1836. He carried out his ministry in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Maryland before being consecrated Bishop of Philadelphia in 1852. He is remembered for the number of schools that he opened and his concern for the Forty Hours Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. He died in 1860.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 10: 25—37*

And behold a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" And the lawyer answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself." And Jesus said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live."

But the lawyer, desiring to be justified, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" The lawyer said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said, "Go and do likewise."

Reflection— While teachers must train students in skills and insure they learn essential facts, they must also relate in a human way to the students. These interpersonal relationships sometimes affect students more than the formal classroom instruction. Do we consider our students as our brothers and sisters?

Pause

Response— *Sirach 6: 5—17*

A pleasant voice multiplies friends,
and a gracious tongue multiplies courtesies.

When you gain a friend, gain that person through testing,
do not trust hastily.

For some are friends at their own convenience,
but will not stand by you in your day of trouble.

And there is a friend who changes into an enemy,
and will disclose a quarrel to your disgrace.

And there is a friend who is a table companion,
but will not stand by you in your day of trouble.

In your prosperity a friend will be your equal,
and be bold with your servants;

but if you are brought low this one will turn against you,
and will hide from your presence.

A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter;
a person that has found one has found a treasure.

There is nothing so precious as a faithful friend,
and no scales can measure this excellence.

A faithful friend is a sustainer of life;
and those who fear God will find a faithful friend.

Petitions— Let us pray for...

Response— Guide of Our Lives, help us in our need.

Our Father...

Prayer— God, Protector of All, your Son showed a special care for all especially the poor and little children. John Neumann also manifested a deep concern for the young and the poor. Instill in us your love and concern for all so that we may touch the hearts of our students. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our model. Amen.

March 19 — Saint Joseph, Husband of Mary

Theme—PROTECTOR OF THE CHILD JESUS

Explanation—Joseph was the silent man in scripture but he was also decisive in his protection of Jesus. Teachers also are called upon to protect children by helping them to identify, evaluate and reject the evil influences of society which seek to lead them away from the message of the Gospel.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Matthew 1: 18—25 and 2; 13—15 and 19—23*

Now when the visitors from the East had departed, behold, an angel of God appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt.

But when Herod died, behold an angel of God appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.

Reflection—Do we protect our students with the same concern that Joseph showed for the child Jesus?

Pause

Response—*Wisdom 4: 7–11; 13–15*

For the righteous person,
though that one die early will be at rest.

For old age is not honored for length of time,
nor measured by number of years,

but understanding is gray hair for people,
and a blameless life is ripe old age.

There was one who pleased God and God loved,
and while living among sinners this one was taken up.

This one was caught up lest evil change understanding
or guile deceive the soul.

Being perfected in a short time,
the person fulfilled long years;

for that one was pleasing to God,
therefore God quickly took that one from the midst of wickedness.

Yet the people saw and did not understand,
nor take such a thing to heart,

that God's grace and mercy are with the elect,
and God watches over the holy ones.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Heavenly Protector, protect and help us.

Our Father...

Prayer—God, Giver of Jesus, you chose Joseph to become the visible father of Jesus and committed to him the care of your Son. Help us to carry out diligently the task of caring for your children no matter what their needs. We ask this in the name of Jesus and with the intercession of Joseph, his protector. Amen.

Theme—PATRON OF TEACHERS

Explanation—John Baptist de La Salle was born of an enterprising French family in 1651. After his ordination to the priesthood, God lead him to develop a special concern for the poor urban children of Rheims. He founded the Brothers of the Christian Schools (F.S.C.) in 1680 and spent the next 40 years opening a variety of schools throughout France, writing books for teachers and students and training teachers. He died on Good Friday in 1719 and was proclaimed Patron of Teachers in 1950.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

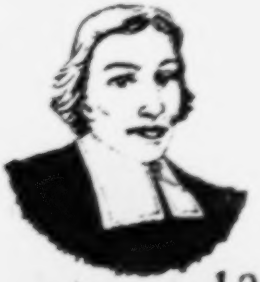
Reading—*Matthew 18: 1–7*

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, he put the child in the midst of them, and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. The one who becomes as humble as a child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for that person to have a millstone fastened round the neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."

Reflection—Why did Jesus show such affection for children? Do we show affection for them? Do we realize that our effective teaching is the best gift that we can give our students?

Pause



Response—*Sirach 6: 18—20; 21; 32—37*

My child, from your youth up choose instruction,
and until you are old you will keep finding wisdom.

Come to wisdom like one who plows and sows,
and waits for the good harvest.

For in the service of wisdom you will toil a little while,
and soon you will eat of the produce of wisdom.

Wisdom seems very harsh to the uninstructed;
a weakling will not remain with studying.

If you are willing, my child, you will be taught,
and if you apply yourself you will become clever.

If you love to listen you will gain knowledge,
and if you incline your ear you will become wise.

Stand in the assembly of the elders,
cleave to the one who is wise.

Be ready to listen to every narrative,
and do not let wise proverbs escape you.

If you see an intelligent person, regularly visit such a one,
let your footstep wear out this one doorstep.

Reflect on the laws of the Most High,
and meditate at all times on God's commandments.

God will give you insight,
and your desire for wisdom will be granted.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Giver of Wisdom, grant our petition.

Our Father...

Prayer—Source of All Knowledge, you chose John Baptist de La Salle to give young people a Christian education. Give your Church teachers who will devote themselves to helping your children grow as Christian men and women. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the great teacher. Amen.

June 24 – Birth of Saint John the Baptist

Theme—ZEAL IN PREPARING PEOPLE FOR THE COMING OF JESUS

Explanation—John the Baptist was sent to prepare for the coming of Jesus. His actions show a person completely committed to serving God and making people ready to receive the Good News.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 3: 2–4; 7–18*

The word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness; and he went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

John said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits that befit repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father;' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the multitude asked him, "What shall we do?" and he answered them, "The one who has two coats, let that one share with the one who has none; a person who has food should do likewise." Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?' And he said to them, "Collect no more than is appointed you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."

As the people were in expectation, and all questioned in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he were the Christ, John answered them all, "I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire..." With many other exhortations, he preached good news to the people.

Reflection—John's zeal made him directly challenge the people. Do we challenge our students? Do we manifest John's zeal?

Pause

Gospel Reflection Passage—*Luke 1: 68–79*

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,
for God has visited and redeemed the people,

and has raised up a horn of salvation for us,
in the house of David, the servant,

as God spoke by the mouth of the prophets from of old,
that we should be saved from our enemies,
and from the hands of all who hate us;

to perform the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and to remember God's holy covenant,

the oath which God swore to our father Abraham,
to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of
our enemies, might serve without fear, in holiness and
righteousness before God all the days of our life.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

to give knowledge of salvation to his people
in the forgiveness of their sins,

through the tender mercy of our God,
when the day shall dawn on us from on high.

to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow
of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Most High, hear our prayer.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of All Times, you raised up John the Baptist to prepare the world for your Son. John did this with great zeal, so much that he even gave his life for you. Fill us with the same zeal to spread your word without reservation. We ask this in the name of Jesus and with the intercession of John the Baptist, our model of zeal. Amen.

Theme—ZEAL FOR EVANGELIZATION

Explanation— Between 1642 and 1649 Isaac and seven other Jesuits were martyred in New York State as they attempted to convert the Huron and Iroquois Indians. Isaac after escaping from harsh tortures returned to his work among the Indians and was finally martyred.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading— *Matthew 10: 16—23; 26—33*

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of people; for they will deliver you up to councils, and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of God speaking through you. Brothers will deliver up brothers to death, and parents their children, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

"So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without God's will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So every one who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before God who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before God who is in heaven."

Reflection— These martyrs showed zeal for the salvation of souls. Do our lessons reflect our zeal to have our students learn?

Pause

140

Response—*Psalm 125*

Those who trust in God are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides for ever.

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
so God is round about the people, from this time forth and for evermore.

For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest
upon the land allotted to the righteous,

lest the righteous put forth their hands to do wrong.

Do good, O God, to those who are good,
and to those who are upright in their hearts!

But those who turn aside to crooked ways
God will lead away with evil doers!

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Source of Our Strength, make us firm in our belief and listen to our request.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of Our Faith, your Son suffered to spread your message, your saints journeyed throughout the world to teach and spread the Good News despite sufferings and trials. Inspire us with zeal for your word and help us to impart this to our students. We ask this in the name of Jesus and his martyrs. Amen.

November 1—Feast of All Saints

Theme—REWARD FOR A FAITHFUL MINISTRY

Explanation—Today the Church recalls those millions of people who have died and having lived faithful lives have earned for themselves eternal happiness in heaven. Among these saints are numerous people who were engaged in the ministry of Catholic education.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Mark 10: 23—31*

And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With mere humans it is impossible, but not with God." Peter began to say to him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, and in the age to come eternal life. But many that are first will be last, and the last first."

Reflection—Jesus assures us that those who follow him in the ministry of teaching the Good News will receive rewards both in this life and in eternal life. How does God reward us for our faithfulness?

Pause

Response—*Psalm 103: 1–2; 6; 8–13; 15–18*

Bless God, O my soul; and all that is within me,
bless God's holy name!

God is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

God will not always chide,
nor will God's anger remain for ever.

God does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor requite us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is God's steadfast love toward those who fear;

as far is the east from the west,
so far does God remove our transgressions from us.

As parents pity their children,
so God pities those who fear.

As for us, our days are like grass;
we flourish like flowers of the field;

for the wind passes over us, and we are gone,
and our places are no more.

But the steadfast love of God is from everlasting
to everlasting upon those who fear God,

and God's righteousness extends to generations to come
to those who keep the covenant and follow the
commandments.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God of All, lead us to you.

Our Father...

Prayer—God the Rewarder of All Good, your Son promised eternal life to those who follow his example of teaching. Enable us to faithfully instruct your children so that we and they may come to know you forever in heaven. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our hope, and with the intercession of all the saints. Amen.

November 2 – Feast of All Souls

Theme—UNION AMONG ALL TEACHERS

Explanation—Today we recall those who have not yet entered into eternal life with Jesus. These souls are still undergoing reformation so that they will be ready to fully enjoy the rewards of their labors. Among all who have or are still engaged in the educational ministry a bond of unity exists.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Readings—*John 11: 32—45*

Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was and saw him, fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled; and he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord come and see." Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Provider of all, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you hear me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that they may believe that you did send me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.

Reflection—This story is a symbol of Jesus' resurrection and our own resurrection. Do we encourage our students to reflect on their future resurrection and to pray for others?

Pause

Response—*Wisdom 3: 1—8*

But the souls of the righteous are in the hands of God,
and no torment will ever touch them.

In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,
and their departure was thought to be an affliction,

and their going from us to be their destruction;
but they are at peace.

For though in the sight of people they were punished,
their hope is full of immortality.

Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good,
because God tested them and found them worthy;

like gold in the furnace God tried them,
and like a sacrificial burnt offering God accepted them.

In the time of their visitation they will shine forth,
and will run like sparks through the stubble.

They will govern nations and rule over peoples,
and God will reign over them for ever.

Those who trust God will understand truth,
and the faithful will abide with God in love

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Source of Our Unity, hear our petitions.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of Mercy, your Son promised eternal life to those who followed his teaching ministry. Look with favor upon those who have labored in the vineyard of the classroom and recall the many services that they rendered to their students and all their efforts to help their students come to know you. We ask your mercy in the name of Jesus, our true promise. Amen.

November 13—Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini

Theme—CONCERN FOR THE LONELY AND FORGOTTEN

Explanation—Mother Cabrini left her native land of Italy and came to the United States to care for the new arrivals. She and her sisters opened schools and hospitals to care for the poor. She enabled people to become productive citizens.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

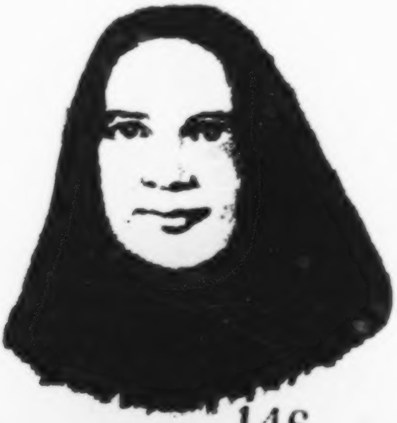
Pause

Reading—*Luke 6: 32—38*

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for God is kind to the ungrateful and selfish. Be merciful, even as God is merciful."

Reflection—In these words Jesus truly challenges us to show concern for all students especially those who may be alienated from others. Catholic teaching ministers are called to be considerate and consoling toward their students.

Pause



Response—*Sirach 4: 1—5; 8—10*

My children, deprive not the poor of their living,
and do not keep the needed waiting.

Do not grieve the one who is hungry,
nor anger a person in want.

Do not add to the troubles of an angry mind,
nor delay your gift to a beggar.

Do not reject an afflicted suppliant,
nor turn your face away from the poor.

Do not avert your eyes from the needy,
nor give a person an occasion to curse you...

Incline your ear to the poor,
and answer them peacefully and gently.

Deliver the one who is wrong from the hand of the wrongdoer;
and do not be faint-hearted in judging a case.

Be like parents to orphans,
and be a help to the father and the mother;

you will be like a child of the Most High,
and God will love you more than does your parent.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God of All Nations, help us to imitate Mother Cabrini and hear our prayers.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of All Nations, you enabled the United States to be a meeting place for all cultures and you raised up Frances Cabrini to care for the poorest in this land of plenty. Motivate us to show a special concern for students having problems and for students new to this land. We ask this in the name of Jesus who commanded us to teach all nations and with the intercession of Frances Cabrini who did teach many nations. Amen.

Theme—THE FIRST TEACHER OF JESUS

Explanation—Once Mary accepted the call of God, she gave herself completely to the task of raising Jesus. She was thus the first teacher of Jesus. Her many honors stem from her willingness to become the Mother of God.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 1: 26–38*

In the sixth month (of her cousin Elizabeth's pregnancy with John) the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came to her and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Most High is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?"

And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called the Son of God. And behold your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Reflection—Mary was called to teach Jesus. We are called to teach the Jesus in others. Mary performed her teaching with great faith and zeal. Do we follow her example of complete dedication to Jesus and to our work?

Pause

Response—*Luke 1: 46—55*

My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for you have regarded the low estate of your handmaid.

For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;
for you who are mighty have done great things for me,
and holy is your name.

For you show mercy to those who fear you
from generation to generation.

You have shown strength in your arm,
you have scattered the proud of heart;

You have put down the mighty from their thrones,
and exalted the lowly;

You have filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich you have sent empty away.

You have helped your servant Israel,
in remembrance of your mercy,

You spoke to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his posterity for ever.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—Protector of Us, help us to imitate Mary and grant our request.

Our Father...

Prayer—God, you chose a young girl to become the mother of your Son. Mary accepted your call and educated the Son of God. Help us to respond to your call and educate our students with the message of your Son. We ask this in the name of Jesus and with the intercession of Mary his mother and the mother of us all. Amen.

149

Theme—ZEAL FOR TEACHING

Explanation—The apostles spread throughout the whole Roman world to teach the Good News of Jesus. The zeal that they had for teaching resulted in the establishment of the infant Church.

Let us recall that we are in God's holy presence. In the name of the Father...

Pause

Reading—*Luke 5: 3—11; 27—28; and Luke 6: 12—16*

Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your net for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great school of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." For he was astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching people." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Jesus went out to the mountain to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called his disciples, and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles; Simon, whom he called Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Reflection—Each of the apostles followed Jesus immediately after he invited him. The *Acts of the Apostles* and the tradition of the Catholic Church testify to their zeal in spreading the Gospel. Do we help our students to see Jesus more clearly, to follow him more nearly, and to love him more dearly.

Pause

Reading—*Ephesians 1: 3—10*

Blessed be God, the Protector of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

even as God chose us in Jesus before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless.

God destined us in love to be children through Jesus Christ,
according to God's will and to praise God because of what is freely given to us in Jesus.

In Jesus we have redemption through his blood,
the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of God's grace which are lavished on us.

For God has made known to us in all wisdom and insight
the mysteries of God's will,

according to the purpose which God set forth in Jesus as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in God, things in heaven and things on earth.

Petitions—Let us pray for...

Response—God of All Teachers, hear our wish.

Our Father...

Prayer—God of All Ministries, your Son chose the apostles to spread your message around the world. They both taught and showed us how to communicate your truth. Make us follow in their footsteps especially in having a zeal to teach others. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the first apostle. Amen.

Department of Elementary Schools
National Catholic Educational Association
1077 30th Street, N.W.
Suite 100
Washington, DC 20007-3852
(202) 337-6232